

Southern Indians in the American Revolution

By James H. O'Donnell, III

SOUTHERN INDIANS
IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



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for John, Anne, and Susan

PREFACE

The popular view of the American Revolution has for many decades emphasized such familiar scenes as the skirmishes at Lexington and Concord, fighting at Bunker Hill, tattered colonials versus resplendent redcoats, Washington in retreat at Valley Forge, or Americans triumphant at Yorktown. Yet either from a broad historical point of view or from a simple geographical one, these impressions are severely limited, for they confine the war to the eastern seaboard. Largely ignored is the war on the western frontier, which not only involved the main conflict between the colonists and the mother country but also encompassed a war fought by the Indians for their very survival.

Soon after the beginning of hostilities the Indians were approached by the British and the Americans, each with their own story and appeal, and each for their own reasons urging neutrality. The British, fearing that Indian raids might drive undecided colonials into the Patriot camp, asked that the warriors stand ready, delaying any action until troops could cooperate with them. The Americans preached a message of friendly neutrality, hoping that the warriors would stay out of the conflict altogether, leaving the Patriot forces free to struggle with the royal armies.

The Indian tribes, having been drawn into earlier conflicts between France and Great Britain, had reason to be interested in this colonial rebellion. If they became involved again, it was

clear to most of them that it was no longer a matter of playing off one suitor against another or of choosing the ally with the most gifts, but of preserving their lands and thereby, their autonomy. Every Indian tribe was acutely aware of the insatiable appetite for land which gnawed at the colonials; the many acres lost in the years past served as a constant reminder.

George III's Proclamation of 1763, which had temporarily closed to white settlement all lands west and north of the streams flowing into the Atlantic Ocean, had long since been defied, and boundary lines subsequently agreed upon had been crossed. Indeed, resentment was fresh, for the Creeks had been forced into a cession in 1773, and the Cherokees had bargained away most of Kentucky and Middle Tennessee for a cabintful of trade goods in 1775. The great Northern tribes—the Iroquois, Senecas, Shawnees, and Ottawas—were also pressured by the westward-moving settlers, although British Indian officials had at least tried to slow down the westward advance between 1760 and 1775; thus it was likely that, if the Indians were to take up arms, they would support the British.

In the North the Iroquois listened to both sides, but took no action until American parties penetrated their country searching for suspected British agents. Then the Iroquois struck the Pennsylvania and New York frontiers, bringing retaliation by the Americans in 1779. West in the Ohio country the tribes feared renewed colonial expansion beyond the mountains and across the Ohio. Plans were laid by these Western Indians and the British to attack the Virginia-Pennsylvania frontier in 1779, but their plans were spoiled by the success of a Virginia expedition under George R. Clark that captured the British command posts in the Illinois country.

It was south of the Ohio, however, that the first hostilities by Indians occurred, when the Cherokees took the road to war in the spring of 1776, despite pleas from British officials that they remain neutral. No longer would the Cherokees tolerate the daily loss of their territory or the duplicity of the frontier leaders who professed friendship for the tribe and then cheated it at

every opportunity. Cherokee attacks in 1776 caused retaliatory expeditions by the Patriots, who burned the Indian towns and provisions; and when the Cherokees signed treaties with representatives of the United States government in 1777, the tribe was in no position to reject demands for land. The Creeks meanwhile had remained inactive, largely out of fear that they would be punished as were the Cherokees; and confirming their fears, when they finally did support the British, white Georgians soon clamored for their land.

Everywhere the story was similar: Any tribe that had given aid and comfort to the British was to be treated as a defeated enemy and must pay spoils to the victors. From the point of view of the whites, the actions of the tribesmen had but confirmed their worst suspicions, for in the minds of many colonials the warriors were only too willing to lift their murderous hatchets in exchange for a blanket or a bottle of rum. Thus when the Indians struck they did so out of the baseness of their nature, not for reasons of self-defense. Raids on the frontier had cost the lives of colonials, the time and money of the government, and the commitment of troops who might otherwise have been used against the British. Therefore, reasoned the colonials, the tribes should be punished in double measure as an example to prevent further atrocities. Representative of such an attitude was Thomas Jefferson's comment after the Cherokee attacks of 1776:

I hope that the Cherokees will now be driven beyond the Mississippi and that this in future will be declared to the Indians the invariable consequence of their beginning a war. Our contest with Britain is too serious and too great to permit any possibility of avocation from the Indians. This then is the reason for driving them off, and our Southern colonies are happily rid of every other enemy and may exert their whole force in that quarter.

The general theme that the Indian was an utter villain would continue to distort historical accounts and to influence Indian-white relations. A policy of Indian displacement persisted from

its beginnings in early colonial times through the American Revolution and did not cease in the nineteenth century, not even after the slaughter of the Sioux at Wounded Knee Creek, South Dakota, in 1890. Utter destruction would not come as a result of the American Revolution, but the white man's basic belief in his material and social superiority is implicit in his dealings with the tribes both during and after the Revolution.

The story of Indian-white conflicts during the years of the American Revolution (1775-1783) has never been told in depth. General histories of the period present only cursory accounts at best, and even those scholarly treatments limited to one of the war's two theaters—North and South—have failed to assess the impact of the war on the Indian tribes or the influence of the Indians in effecting the course of the war. An understandable reason for this void, of course, is the basic complexity of the story, for Indian affairs during these years involved literally a "cast of thousands." There were two central governments, thirteen individual state governments, two military commands, thousands of warriors and frontiersmen, and dozen of officials in the British and American Indian departments. Then, too, there was the sweep of events from North to South.

In filling at least part of the void this book focuses on the four major tribes of Southern Indians during the years 1775-1783 and the relationship of those tribes to the war. The geographically oriented approach is largely practical because most other organizational patterns that one could follow, such as Indian departments, military commands, governmental divisions, the divisions of the war into two theaters, traditional tribal groupings, and natural sectionalism, all suggest a similar division of the topic. In addition, the intention of this volume is to present a broad overview of the struggle on the western frontier, embracing the activities of the great Southern tribes—the Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and the Creeks—as well as the British and the Americans during these crucial years.

Previous studies, such as Helen L. Shaw's *British Administration of the Southern Indians* (1931) or Walter Mohr's *Fed-*

eral Indian Relations, 1774-1788 (1933), have been narrower in scope. Even a book seemingly so appropriate as Jack L. Sosin's *The Revolutionary Frontier, 1763-1783* (1967) categorizes the frontier largely in terms of white civilization advancing westward. Tribal studies provide details about the individual nations, but they give no overview. Among the better works on the Southern tribes are David Corkran's *The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783* (1967), Chapman C. Milling's *Red Carolinians* (1969), and Robert S. Cotterill's *The Southern Indians: The Story of the Civilized Tribes Before Removal* (1954). Even more specific are two fundamental articles by Philip Hamer on British policy toward the Cherokees early in the war (1931).

Fortunately, there are rather extensive documentary materials available on this subject. Although the bulk of the British manuscripts are in the Colonial Office papers, series 5, at the British Public Record Office, they are also available on film at the Library of Congress. The major American repository for British materials pertaining to this topic is the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan, where the researcher will find the Clinton, Gage, Knox, and Shelburne papers. For the American side one may start with the Journal of the Continental Congress and the complementary Papers of the Continental Congress at the National Archives. Papers of individual military leaders will be found at the Library of Congress as well as in various state and university archives. The specific collections used in my research are listed in the bibliography. Each state archive will yield executive papers, treaties, and assorted other pertinent materials. State historical societies also house excellent collections of original documents for the period, particularly the South Carolina Historical Society with its Laurens papers. Those for the period 1746-1763 have been published, and the remainder are now available on film. Never to be ignored in any study of the frontier is the Lyman G. Draper collection of manuscripts at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, available on film for some years.

Of a number of printed documents the following have been

helpful: Edmund C. Burnett, *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*; Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Manuscripts of the Earl of Dartmouth*, *Report on American Manuscripts in the Royal Institution of Great Britain*, and *Report on the Manuscripts of Mrs. Stopford-Sackville*; William Palmer, *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, and William Saunders, *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina*.

Although colonial newspapers did not offer extensive factual information for my research, they did provide some insight into the climate of opinion. One measure of the impact of frontier events on the public and on policy makers is the rapidity with which these incidents were reported and the amount of space given to follow-up stories.

For assistance in the preparation of this book much appreciation goes to Duke University. Encouragement from the history faculty was constant since the beginning of my graduate study there. Funds from the Graduate Council while I was a student and a postdoctoral summer stipend from the Research Council aided my progress. Especially am I indebted to John Richard Alden, James B. Duke Professor of History, who suggested the need for this study and then gave patient counsel through the years.

My thanks go also to the following libraries and institutions and their splendid staffs: William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan; Duke University Library; Georgia Department of Archives and History; Georgia Historical Society; Institute of Early American History and Culture; Library of Congress; the National Archives; North Carolina Department of Archives and History; South Carolina Department of Archives and History; South Carolina Historical Society; South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; Virginia Historical Society; and the Virginia State Library.

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Marietta, Ohio

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CONTENTS

Preface	vii
Prologue	3
I. "Assassin-Allies" or Friends and Brothers?	17
II. The Cherokee War of 1776	34
III. A Year of Peace	54
IV. Empty Promises	69
V. A Year of Change	80
VI. Promises Fulfilled	95
VII. The Decline of British Influence	109
VIII. Ends and Beginnings	125
Epilogue	140
Abbreviations	145
Selected Bibliography	147
Index	165

MAPS

1. The Southern Indians, 1775-1783	10
2. Historic Sites and Rivers Prominent during the Revolutionary Period	14
3. White Expansion Threatens the Southern Tribes, 1770-1783	142

SOUTHERN INDIANS
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PROLOGUE



On July 24, 1775, John Adams wrote to his wife of the problems confronting the delegates assembled at Philadelphia for the second Continental Congress. In the eight months since the first Congress, “the voice of reason had been drowned out by the din of arms,” leaving Adams and his associates the responsibility of preparing for war. Adams lamented that

when fifty or sixty men have a Constitution to form for a great Empire, at the same time that they have a country of fifteen hundred miles extent to fortify, millions to arm and train, a naval power to begin, a extensive commerce to regulate, numerous tribes of Indians to negotiate [*sic*] with, a standing army of twenty-seven thousand men to raise, pay, victual, and officer, I really shall pity those fifty or sixty men.¹

Concerning the Constitution, the defenses, the standing army and its organization, the navy, and the commerce, much has been written. Any current bibliography on the American Revolution will include entries under these headings. By contrast, little will be found on the “numerous tribes of Indians” or the negotiations with them. The purpose of this book is to fill a part of that gap by focusing on the Southern Indians as participants in the War for American Independence.

¹ John Adams to his wife, July 24, 1775, in Margaret W. Willard (ed.), *Letters on the American Revolution, 1774–1776* (Boston, 1925), 188.

Restricting this study to the Southern tribes is suggested in the first instance by the fact that the imperial machinery for dealing with the Indians, as well as the comparable Continental organizations, separated the Southern tribes from the Northern. Also, there is the matter of the two geographic areas in which the war was fought. The relative proximity of the Northern tribes to the war zone during the early years of the conflict made dealings with them somewhat different from those with the more distant Southern tribes. Occurrences in one area are not totally unrelated to those in another, but the story is less confusing if told in this way.

When Adams and his associates gave consideration to those "numerous tribes of Indians" he mentioned, they could draw on more than one hundred and sixty years of colonial experience. From 1607 to 1755 British Indian policy had been rather haphazard, but in the main relations had focused on matters relating to land or trade. Negotiations had been carried on by the royal governors, who spoke in the king's name but who often were interested in colonial aims too, as well as by special groups such as merchants and traders. Attempts to realize uniform policy during the existence of the attempted intercolonial organizations such as the New England Confederation or the Dominion of New England and at the time of the Albany Congress had all proved futile.²

From the time of their first dealings with the Indians, the English had conceptualized the tribal groupings in European terms, referring to them as "nations" headed by "emperors." The use of such terms was misleading, for although the tribes were united by bonds of language, tradition, custom, and territory, there was little national sovereignty. Even among relatively sophisticated tribes like the Iroquois there was no centralized government in the European sense.

In negotiations between the English and Indians the exchange of gifts became a *sine qua non*. In the seventeenth cen-

² Henry Timberlake, *Memoirs . . . 1756-1765*, ed. Samuel C. Williams (Marietta, Ga., 1948), 93.

ture these tokens were often of equal value, but as the years passed, those given by the Indians diminished while those of the English increased. By the beginning of the eighteenth century the natives had come to expect a generous distribution of gifts on every occasion. Usually the British, and the French too, for they were doing the same thing, looked upon the presents as money well spent, especially if the Indians were willing to cede land or confirm an alliance. One problem in this system was that the Indians became greedy, particularly if two countries sought their allegiance. Such competition was costly to the whites, for the rivalry might lead to the dispensing of presents disproportionate to the military importance of the recipients. Then if the supply of gifts was terminated, trouble often occurred.³

The renewal of hostilities with France in 1755 drove to action an English government already keenly aware of the need for a systematic implementation of Indian policy. William Johnson was appointed superintendent for Indian affairs in the Northern District (the region north of the Ohio), and within a year Edmond Atkin was named superintendent in the Southern District.⁴ Already a beloved trader among the Iroquois, Johnson would render outstanding service during the war and become a powerful official on the Northern frontier after 1763. Atkin, on the other hand, generally was not held in high esteem during his service by either whites or Indians. After his death in 1761 he was succeeded by John Stuart, an ambitious Scots immigrant to South Carolina who had served as a provincial captain

³ Wilbur R. Jacobs, *Wilderness Politics and Indian Gifts: Anglo-French Rivalry Along the Ohio and Northwest Frontier, 1748-1763* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1966), ch. 1.

⁴ For further information on the superintendents and their offices, see Arthur Pound, *Johnson of the Mohawks; A Biography of Sir William Johnson, Irish Immigrant, Mohawk War Chief, American Soldier, Empire Builder* (New York, 1930); John R. Alden, *John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier: A Study of Indian Relations, War, Trade, and Land Problems in the Southern Wilderness, 1754-1775* (Ann Arbor, 1944; rpt. New York, 1966); and Edmond Atkin, *The Appalachian Indian Frontier: The Edmond Atkin Report and Plan of 1775*, ed. Wilbur R. Jacobs (Lincoln, Nebr., 1966).

during the Cherokee War of 1760. During the Seven Years' War these officials were responsible for keeping their Indian charges either steadfastly loyal or so divided that they would not aid the French. In the postwar years they would be concerned primarily with land and trade.

A further indication of Britain's concern about Indian and frontier affairs was the issuing of the well-known Proclamation of 1763. That royal edict temporarily restricted westward expansion, forbade land sales by the Indians except with the permission of the king (and then only in the presence of the superintendent), and instructed the governors to punish those who trespassed on Indian lands. But if London, the governors, the superintendents, the natives, or the land-hungry settlers were seriously interested in how far west one could go before he became a trespasser, a boundary had to be defined. Precision had to be given the proclamation's vague promise that "land and territories lying to the westward of the sources of the rivers which fall into the sea from the west and northwest . . . [or] any other lands . . . not . . . ceded . . . or purchased . . . [are] still reserved to the said Indians . . ."⁵

Thus it was that during the years 1763-1775 the superintendents and their deputies would spend much time determining and having surveyed an Indian boundary line that would stretch from Fort Stanwix in New York to the Floridas. The settlers crowded against and across this line, incurring the irritation of colonial officials, the displeasure of the Indian superintendents, and the wrath of the natives. The continued encroachments of the "Virginians" (as the Southern Indians called all land-hungry frontiersmen) all along the boundary not only would justify complaints and even an occasional raid, but when war came in 1775 would convince the Indians that the best defense of their interests lay in an alliance with the British.

⁵ The text of the proclamation may be found in Henry S. Commager (ed.), *Documents of American History*, 7th ed. (New York, 1963), 47. With regard to the delineation of the boundary in the South, see Louis De Vorsey, Jr., *The Indian Boundary in the Southern Colonies, 1763-1775* (Chapel Hill, 1966).

If William Johnson and John Stuart did not find enough work in settling land and boundary disputes, their involvement in the trade certainly took up the slack. By the middle of the eighteenth century, many of the American Indians were almost completely dependent on trade for their livelihood.⁶ Infants were wrapped in European cloth and adults dressed in manufactured clothing, women cooked in brass kettles, warriors abandoned the bow and spear for the trading musket, and whenever possible they wanted their corn, meat, and rum provided them. In exchange for these precious commodities, the natives traded furs and dressed deer skins.

Much of the trouble resulting from the trade was the work of the white or halfbreed traders, whose inflated prices, short measures, land schemes, and misuse of rum often created unrest. The superintendents' difficult task was to encourage honesty in dealing with the tribesmen, but their efforts at establishing rates of exchange for the trade met with little success.

John Stuart and William Johnson established their influence among the Indians and kept order by maintaining resident agents and commissaries in the villages. To further the influence of his representatives, the king annually sent out gifts for distribution. Sometimes the royal largess was augmented by presents from the governors, the assemblies, interested groups such as the traders, and by the superintendents, if they felt it necessary to draw from their yearly budgets or from extraordinary monies granted by the commander-in-chief in North America.⁷

⁶ Concerning the trade, traders, and common abuses, see: Jacobs, *Wilderness Politics*, 5, 53-54; Timberlake, *Memoirs*, 76-77; David Taitt, "Journal of David Taitt's Travels from Pensacola, West Florida, to and through the Country of the Upper and Lower Creeks, 1772," in Newton D. Mereness (ed.), *Travels in the American Colonies* (New York, 1916), 504-25, 553; Alexander Cameron to John Stuart, Sept. 23, 1766, quoted in Journal of Superintendent's Proceedings, April 21, 1767, to June 6, 1767, in "Meetings with traders and Indians concerning Prices and Regulation of the Trade," Thomas Gage Papers, WLCL; and William Bartram, *The Travels of William Bartram*, ed. Francis Harper (New Haven, 1958), 161.

⁷ Thomas Gage to JP [John Pownall], Feb. 5, 1776, in CO5/76, 89, micro-

As superintendent in the Southern District, John Stuart was responsible for four principal tribes: the Cherokee, the Chickasaw, the Choctaw, and the Creeks. The Cherokee, whose towns had been classified by the English into four groups (Lower, Valley, Middle, and Overhill), were located in the present-day western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, northwestern Georgia, and northwestern South Carolina. To the south of them lived the Creeks, a loosely joined confederation containing three divisions (Upper Creeks, Lower Creeks, and Seminoles), whose villages lay in present northwestern Florida, western Georgia, and southeastern Alabama. To the west of the Creeks the Choctaw were to be found, settled between the Tombigbee River and the upper reaches of the Pearl River in what is today southern Mississippi. Their towns, like those of the Creeks, were grouped into three divisions (the East Party, the West Party, and the Six Towns). North of the Choctaw lived the Chickasaw, whose principal villages were located in the counties of present north Mississippi.

Between fifty and sixty thousand natives constituted the Southern tribes in 1775. Since the statistics kept by the British Indian officials listed only fighting men per tribe, the totals would depend on whether one accepted a ratio of three, four, or five noncombatants to each warrior. If a 4:1 ratio is assumed to be the most probable, the figures would show: Cherokee, 3,000 warriors, 12,000 total; Chickasaw, 475 warriors, 1,900 total; Choctaw, 3,100 warriors, 12,400 total; and Creeks, 3,500 warriors, 14,000 total.⁸ Adding to this figure of 50,300 the few hun-

film at Duke Univ., Durham, N. C., and in Gage Papers, vol. 167 (Indian Affairs), WLCL.

⁸ For estimates of the Indian population, see James Wright to Lord Dartmouth, Sept. 20, 1773, in G. W. J. DeRenne (ed.), "Letters from Governor Sir James Wright to the Earl of Dartmouth and Lord George Germain, Secretaries of State for America, from August 24, 1774, to February 16, 1782," *CGHS* (Savannah, 1873), III, 169-70; "A New Map of the Southern District of North America. From Surveys Taken by the Compiler and others, from accounts of Travellers and from the best authorities, &c., &c., Compiled in 1781 for Lt. Col. Thomas Brown, His Majesty's Superintendent

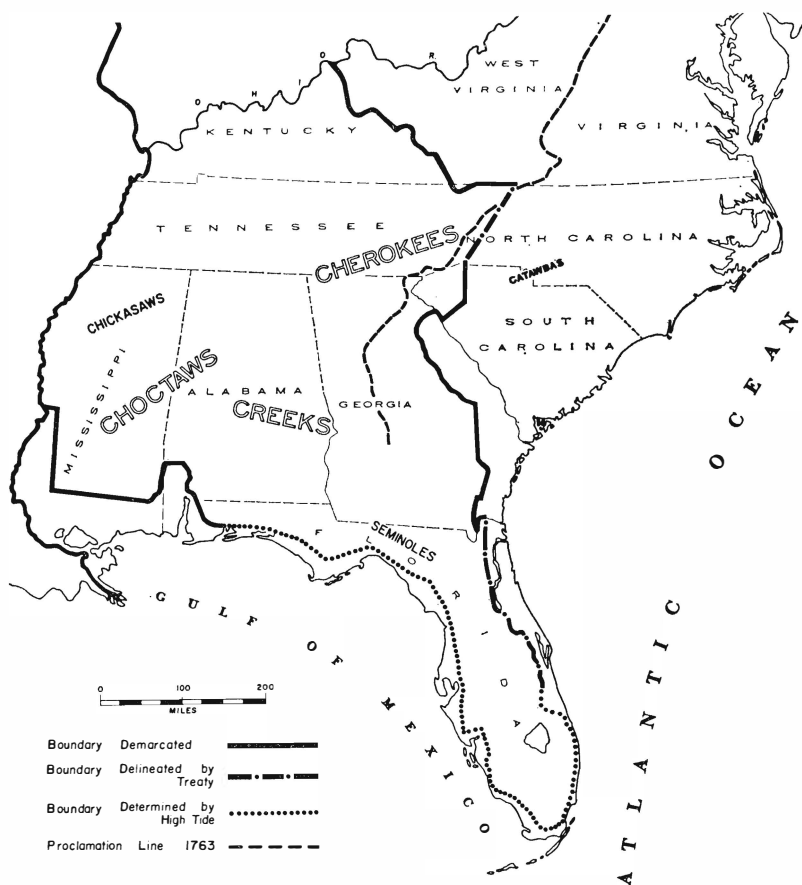
dred comprising the scattered tribal remnants, the total Indian population of the South would not exceed 60,000.

Farming was the principal occupation of these Southern Indians, and most of them lived in villages located near the streams that provided both water and food.⁹ In the towns of the Cherokee the white man would find what to him seemed the most advanced type of Indian housing, because by 1775 the people of that tribe were living in log cabins. Less familiar would be the lodges of varying construction which housed the other Southern tribesmen. The foodstuffs of the Indians would not be totally alien to the white visitor, for game was supplemented by corn, beans, and potatoes grown in the rich river bottoms. Although the natives would eat beef if given a steer, few of the Southern tribes were raising cattle by 1775. Most of their animal husbandry was concentrated on the breeding of horses (a skill at which the Chickasaw excelled) and a few hogs. Even at this early date, many of the older craft skills were dying; the Indians still made a few baskets and other utensils but trade provided the majority of their commodities.

The roles played by men and women in Indian society were fairly well defined but by no means rigidly fixed. Usually the man was the hunter and warrior, the partner in propagating the race, sometimes the statesman, and occasionally the priest. Most of the Eastern tribes were matrilineal; hence, the boys looked to maternal uncles for fatherly guidance. Because with few exceptions the way to success and status was by prowess in warfare,

of Indian Affairs," by Joseph Purcell, photocopy at Raleigh; George Germain Papers, XVII, 11, WLCL; and *Atkin Report*, ed. Jacobs, 42-44.

⁹ The following discussion of the life and society of the Southern Indians is drawn from: Bartram, *Travels*, 122-24, 133-34, 224, 231-33, 245; John R. Swanton, *Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians* (Washington, D. C., 1931), 41; J. F. D. Smyth, *A Tour in the United States of America; Containing an Account of . . . that vast Continent*, 2 vols. (Dublin, 1784), II, 5, 238; Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, ed. Rembert W. Patrick (Gainesville, 1962), 71; John R. Swanton, *The Indians of the Southeastern United States* (Washington, D. C., 1946), 11; Timberlake, *Memoirs*, 61, 69, 72, 93; and James Adair, *The History of the American Indians* (London, 1775), 241-42.



Map 1. The Southern Indian Boundary Line on the Eve of the American Revolution. Simplified from map on p. 232, *The Indian Boundary in the Southern Colonies, 1763-1775*, by Louis De Vorsey, Jr. (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1966); reprinted with permission from "Early Maps As a Source in the Reconstruction of Southern Indian Landscapes" by Louis De Vorsey, Jr., in *Red, White, and Black: Symposium on Indians in the Old South*, Southern Anthropological Society Proceedings 5, ed. Charles M. Hudson (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1971).

a man's life would be involved almost completely with war or with hunting, which was only a form of war. The lives of the women were filled with the labors of cultivating foodstuffs, preparing game, making some clothing and household utensils, and childbearing. Yet the Indian woman was not a mere drudge, for many attended the tribal councils and spoke their minds. A respected older woman might be given the title "Beloved Woman."

The warfare which so dominated the life of the warrior was not the total war known to the European, but limited raiding. Because of this concept it was unusual for a tribe to sustain hostilities over a long period of time. To the Indians, war was primarily a matter of individual accomplishment. According to tribal customs, a male was accepted as an adult and given a man's name when he had proven himself. Most often a "war party" was a band of about a dozen braves, most of them young bloods under the leadership of a war chief. Their reasons for pursuing the enemy were often as much imagined as real. Particularly was this true in the spring after weather permitted travel. The weeks of winter inactivity had given the old men opportunity to romanticize their youthful exploits and the young men time to dream of glory. After the proper ceremonies, fastings, and ablutions, the band would start out. Once they had given vent to their emotions they usually were eager to return to boast of their deeds. Sometimes they brought back prisoners for torture, but in many cases they adopted them into the tribe.

If all the gunmen from a given tribe were called together to consider war, much discussion would ensue in both village and tribal councils until the war faction had persuaded the majority to accept the symbolic black wampum, or until the wampum had been rejected. Although for the sake of convenience the English designated one tribal chief as the "emperor" (in the case of the Cherokee it was usually the chief of the "Beloved" town of Chote), he had no real authority in the nation. If he could persuade a majority to follow him, he might deserve his

title; otherwise he was little more than a figurehead. Furthermore, even if he and his followers approved a treaty or a war, this was no guarantee that all the tribe would agree.

This division of tribal loyalties carried over into relations with the European countries. Of the four major tribes, only the Chickasaw were consistent and largely unanimous in supporting one power.¹⁰ They were steadfast in their loyalty to Great Britain. By contrast, among the Cherokee there had at times been Francophiles and Anglophiles, and in the Choctaw and Creek tribes there had been French, British, and Spanish factions. Since these alliances depended largely on the openhandedness of the Europeans, the groupings would change from time to time. As long as the French, British, or Spanish emissaries influenced a few villages within a tribe, it would be hard to get any faction to go to war for fear of reprisal. This factionalism would be used by the Americans after 1775, particularly among the Creeks.

To a degree the Indians benefited from their relations with the whites, particularly when they were being wooed by more than one nation. Yet ultimately they would lose, because the white men coveted their lands. Land had been and would remain the basis of contention between the two races as long as they tried to live on the same continent. The Indians might resist for a time, but when the white man wanted the land badly enough, he took it.

By 1770 the whites had crossed the officially surveyed boundary lines in defiance of royal authority and at the risk of Indian retaliation. Across the Appalachians into the valleys of the Watauga, Nolichucky, and Holston rivers came the North Carolinians; there they met Virginians pushing southwest through the mountain valleys. Neither Cherokee protest nor executive proclamations by royal governors slowed the advance. To the southeast along the Catawba River in North Carolina, on the

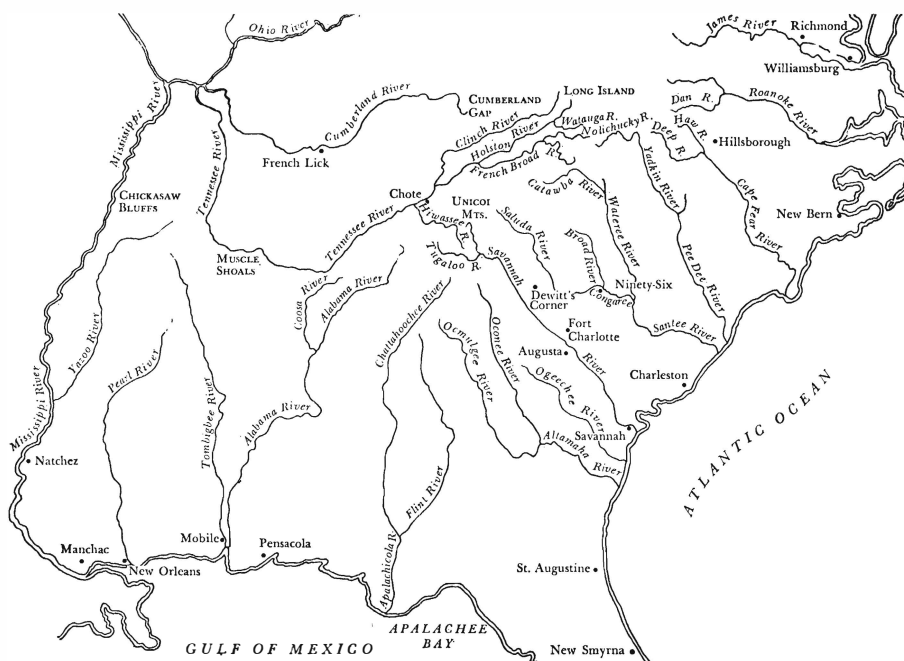
¹⁰ Smyth, *Tour*, I, 238; *Atkin Report*, ed. Jacobs, 62, 68; Adair, *History*, 277, 296n, 300-301; Bartram, *Travels*, 143-44; John Stuart to David Taitt, quoted in Taitt, "Journal," Mereness, *Travels*.

frontier of South Carolina, and in the Georgia backcountry settlers kept up a constant cry for land and more land. In Georgia a so-called New Purchase was negotiated in 1773; so eager were some frontiersmen for land that they rushed in before the surveys were made. Their haste certainly did nothing to allay the fear of the tribes that no matter how much land was granted it would never be enough.

The last frontier land grab before the outbreak of the War for American Independence occurred in March of 1775 at Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga River. There the Transylvania Company, as Richard Henderson of North Carolina and his associates styled themselves, bargained with the Cherokee for a vast tract roughly corresponding to present-day Kentucky and Middle Tennessee. At the same time the Wataugans beguiled the tribe into changing a long-term lease into a purchase agreement. The only hitch in the otherwise smooth negotiations occurred when a young chief known as the Dragging Canoe protested the sale, warned that attempts at settlement would turn the land "dark and bloody," and stalked out of the meeting.¹¹ When news of these transactions reached Superintendent John Stuart and Governor Josiah Martin of North Carolina, they responded by ordering the Wataugans to recross the boundary and the Transylvanians to refrain from taking up their newly acquired domain. Needless to say, these admonitions were not heeded.

Given the insatiable appetite for land which drove the colonials, it is little wonder that when hostilities erupted in the spring of 1775 the majority of the Indians—both Southern and Northern—cast their lot with the British. As far as the royal military officials were concerned, there was no question about

¹¹ In connection with this incident and the Sycamore Shoals negotiations in general, see Deposition of Charles Robertson, Oct. 3, 1777, in William P. Palmer, et al. (eds.), *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts, 1652-1781* (Richmond, 1875-83), I, 291; Deposition of Samuel Wilson, April 15, 1777, *ibid.*, 282-83; Deposition of John Reid, April 16, 1777, *ibid.*, 284; and William Preston to Governor Dunmore, Jan. 23, 1775, CO5/1553, 93.



Map 2. Historic Sites and Rivers Prominent during the Revolutionary Period. Map by Larry Hirst based on a sketch by J.H.O.

calling upon these warriors for action; they had been used in other wars, and they would be used in this one; it was rather a matter of time, place, and degree. Both above and below the Ohio River, British emissaries would seek to maintain the allegiance of the tribes. As British policy on this matter developed, it was understood that the natives would not be encouraged to raid indiscriminately in their horrible fashion, but would be restrained until they could act decisively in conjunction with troops. The impetuosity of the Indians rendered this an impossible task; the results were the Cherokee War of 1776 in the South and the Iroquois raids after 1778 in the North. In both cases the tribes suffered punishment at the hands of the Americans. So severe was that meted out to the Cherokee that the other Southern tribes, and especially the Creeks, were reluctant

to commit themselves to arms in support of the king. Although desultory raiding continued all along the frontier throughout the war, the British found it impossible to utilize the full manpower potential of their Indian allies; no large armies of gunmen would be brought against the king's rebellious subjects.

With the advantage of hindsight one may judge that the Americans had little cause to worry since the Indians never acted decisively. Yet no rational man of the day could possibly have taken that stance. The threat of Indian attack was a great unknown which had to be reckoned with in defense considerations. Never for a moment could the Patriots assume that the natives would take a passive role. They certainly were not passive in times of so-called peace; they could not be expected to be so in time of war. Given the advantages of manpower, organization, and experience which the British Indian officials possessed, the Americans could not hope for anything more than a standoff. If they could not win the Indians over, and this seemed unlikely, at least they could neutralize them, which was a distinct possibility. By playing on the factionalism of the tribes, the Americans were able to parlay what George Galphin of South Carolina called "rum and good words" into an effective counter against the superior resources possessed by the British. That the Patriots did not suffer more harshly from attacks than they did is in part a testimony to their ability at forest diplomacy. Too, credit should be given to those frontiersmen and state leaders who organized and carried out the punitive expeditions which proved so effective in keeping the warriors at home.

From the Indian point of view the War for American Independence was certainly another case of choosing the wrong ally just as many tribes had done during the Seven Years' War. The old practice of the tribal leaders' playing off one suitor against another did not work. What occurred in the long run was a self-inflicted form of the ancient military adage of divide and conquer, the natives dividing and conquering themselves. Rarely did an entire tribe or confederacy listen to the potential

ally of the moment; instead, factionalism prevailed, some villages or factions backing the Americans and others the British. Eventually the entire tribe would suffer, for the Patriots would have their way with one group on the grounds of friendship and with another on the premise that to the victor belong the spoils. In either case the tribe would be forced into a land cession, an old story to the Indians. Defeat for the tribes had meant loss of territory since the first clashes in the seventeenth century and would continue to carry the same meaning through the early federal period into the nineteenth century and on until the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890. American Indian policy and the public opinion behind it would change little in nearly three centuries, whether the administrators were British colonials, struggling Patriots, citizens of a fledgling republic, or the ardent expansionists of nineteenth-century America.

The story unfolded in this study is in many ways the repetition of an oft-told tale. Once again, the American Indians, seeking to protect their interests, inadvertently chose the losing side, putting themselves in a position to be exploited. But more importantly, this narrative underlines the kaleidoscopic nature of the War for American Independence. While armies clashed along the seaboard, warriors, partisans, and frontiersmen struggled in the western forests. In one way the frontier conflict was a backdrop for the events in the East; yet in another it was primary. Although the frontier folk and their adversaries were not ideologically sophisticated, they understood the simple challenge which each hurled at the other. The fight was over the land, a struggle not new and not finished. Each had an interest to protect; each fought bitterly to defend himself. Perhaps most significantly, the particular experiences of the Southern Indians from 1775 to 1783 provided a background for American Indian policy in the next several decades. In sum, this study of the Southern Indians during the War for American Independence fits a few more pieces into the unfinished puzzle depicting the clash between two civilizations.

I. "ASSASSIN-ALLIES"

OR FRIENDS AND BROTHERS?



In the interval between the first two Continental Congresses, most Americans and Englishmen hoped for a peaceful settlement of differences. Yet ever present was the possibility that the colonials would fight for their rights within the empire. War, should it come, would mean not only battlefield struggles in the classic sense, but, if the pattern of earlier wars in North America held true, the Indians also would be involved. Would brother loose the hell-hounds of war against brother? If not, what would be the policy of each side toward the tribes?¹

Some weeks before the skirmishes in Massachusetts, Superintendent John Stuart learned from General Gage of attempts

¹ During the early months of the war the British seem to have taken it for granted that the tribesmen would be involved. Such had been the pattern in the past. Although Lord North briefly defended the use of Indians during an appearance before Parliament in Nov. 1775, there seems to have been no serious question raised until 1777-78. Then Edmund Burke and John Wilkes upbraided the ministry for using "assassin-allies." That this may have been only a device of the opposition rather than a matter of conscience is indicated by the shift in emphasis in 1779 to complaints about the relative lack of Indian participation in proportion to the cost of friendship with them. See John Almon (ed.), *The Parliamentary Register: or, History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons* (London, 1775-80), XVIII, 994; *ibid.*, XIX, 694; *ibid.*, XI, 21; and Marquis de Noailles to the Comte de Vergennes, Nov. 21, 1777, in Benjamin F. Stevens, *Facsimiles of Manuscripts in European Archives Relating to America, 1773-1783* (London, 1890), XIX, no. 1743.

by certain "ill-affected persons" to subvert the loyalty of the Six Nations to the north. Knowing that there were "people in the Southern Provinces as ill-inclined to Governt [*sic*] as any to the northward," the superintendent warned his deputies to be watchful.² Confident in the ability of his assistants, Stuart did not hesitate to assure the secretary of state, Lord Dartmouth, that his charges were steadfast in their "love and attachment to the King, and always ready to act in His Service."³ Encouraging reports from each of his deputies, Alexander Cameron among the Cherokee, David Taitt among the Creeks, Charles Stuart among the Choctaw, and Farquhar Bethune among the Chickasaw, confirmed John Stuart's belief that all was right with his world.

Unfortunately for Stuart, his world was about to be turned upside down. That he could write and receive such reports was sufficient evidence to the supporters of the American cause in South Carolina that the superintendent was a dangerous man who could not be checked easily. A resident of the province for nearly thirty years, with property in Charlestown and plantations in nearby parishes, John Stuart was a respected official.⁴ To arouse passions against him, the Patriots sought to blacken his character. Rumors began to circulate that he had sold out Fort Loudoun during the Cherokee War of 1760, that he had ordered the Cherokee and Catawba to attack the frontier settlements, and that he would arm the slaves and set them against their masters.

Apparently, the rumors had the desired effect, for a worried

² John Stuart to Lord Dartmouth, March 28, 1775, CO5/76, 89.

³ *Ibid.*; Talk of Alexander Cameron to the Great Warrior, Judds Friend, Attakullakulla, Willenawah, and the other head chiefs of the Cherokee, Jan. 16, 1775, in PCC, no. 71, II, 143-44; and David Taitt to John Stuart, April, 1775, CO5/76, 165.

⁴ For information about Stuart's life until 1779, this essay is dependent on Alden, *John Stuart, passim*. In connection with the American accusations against Stuart, see Philip M. Hamer, "John Stuart's Indian Policy During the Early Months of the American Revolution," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 17 (1930-31), 351-66; and *idem.*, "The Wataugans and the Cherokee Indians in 1776," *ETHS Publications* 8 (1931), 108-26.

John Stuart left family and property behind in the summer of 1775, fled to Georgia, and took refuge at a friend's plantation near Savannah. There he met with Georgia Patriot representatives and tried to convince them that the allegations against him were untrue. When the disbelieving Georgians sought to aid parties of South Carolinians who came south to capture him, the superintendent fled aboard a British vessel which took him to St. Augustine. There he continued his efforts to maintain the allegiance of the Southern Indians.⁵ Meanwhile, the Patriots strove to counter him and destroy British influence among the Southern tribes.

Some of the Georgians who pursued Stuart manned part of a small fleet standing off Savannah to intercept British vessels carrying powder. That item was much needed for effective bargaining with the tribes. Early in July 1775, their vigil proved worthwhile when they confiscated large quantities of powder from an inbound ship. Two thousand pounds of this were sent into the Creek towns with the explanation that it was not "from the *King* or from *Government* or from the *Superintendent* or from the *Traders* but from the *People of the Province . . .*."⁶ But because the gift was sufficient only for a few towns, the Creeks were dissatisfied; they were most unhappy that the remainder was being held in Savannah. Late in the summer the Georgians seized another vessel. This time their prize was two hundred and fifty barrels of powder, part of which had been designated as the king's annual present to the Indians, the other part being consigned to the trading houses.⁷

The seizure of the powder was particularly alarming to Sir James Wright, the royal governor of Georgia, who was trying

⁵ Lord William Campbell to Lord Dartmouth, Aug. 31, 1775, CO5/396, 276.

⁶ Sir James Wright to Lord Dartmouth, June 20, 1775, "Wright Letters," CGHS, III, 189-90; same to same, July 18, 1775, *ibid.*, 199; and Kenneth Coleman, *The American Revolution in Georgia, 1763-1789* (Athens, Ga., 1958), 67-68.

⁷ Sir James Wright to Lord Dartmouth, Sept. 23, 1775, "Wright Letters," CGHS, III, 212.

desperately to retain control of his province. Wright feared that the Creeks would be so much angered by the Patriot actions that they would go to war. He had already requested that David Taitt keep inquisitive warriors from visiting Savannah. Now he appealed privately to two members of the provincial government to reopen the trade which had been closed because of a threatened Creek war in the fall of 1774. In this instance there was cooperation between the factions. Quantities of ammunition were allotted the several trading houses in the province and the Patriots gave the Creeks an additional quantity of powder.⁸

Even more significant than Georgia's actions in dealing with the natives were those undertaken by the province of South Carolina, whose long years as the center for the Southern peltry trade had afforded her much experience in Indian affairs. Indeed, when in July of 1775 the South Carolina Provincial Congress appointed two Committees of Inquiry for Indian Affairs, one member of each was a prominent trader. Since in both cases the men enjoyed excellent reputations with the tribesmen, these appointments proved fortunate. Named were George Galphin, LeRoy Hammond, and David Zubly to the committee for the Creeks, and Edward Wilkinson, Andrew Williamson, and John Bowie to the committee for the Cherokee.⁹ Galphin and Wilkinson were the traders of long standing; the other men were well-known frontiersmen.

⁸ Same to the same, June 20, 1775, "Wright Letters," *CGHS*, III, 189-90; "Council held at the Governor's house, October 31, 1775," in "Proceedings and Minutes of the Governor and Council of Georgia, October 4, 1774, through November 7, 1775, and September 6, 1779, through September 20, 1780," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 34 (1950), 208-26, 288-312; 35 (1951), 31-59, 126-51, 196-221; William E. Hemphill (ed.), *Extracts from the Journals of the Provincial Congresses of South Carolina, 1775-1776* (Columbia, 1960), 110; Declaration by the Authority of Congress, Nov. 19, 1775, in R. W. Gibbes, *Documentary History of the American Revolution, 1774-1782* (New York, 1853-57), I, 211.

⁹ Hemphill, *Extracts*, 65. In connection with the colonial Indian trade in South Carolina, see Verner W. Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732* (Ann Arbor, 1956), 108-15.

Of the six named, George Galphin was probably the best known and the most influential. Active in the Indian trade since the 1740s, Galphin supported traders in many of the Creek towns. Too, he had fathered several children by his Indian wife. His home, Silver Bluff, was located on the South Carolina side of the Savannah River some miles south of Augusta, Georgia, giving him some influence in both provinces. A political moderate, Galphin for a time had hoped for reconciliation between the colonies and England but ultimately had come to stand for the Patriot cause.¹⁰

Soon after his appointment, Galphin informed the Creeks that he had been commissioned to fill the place of John Stuart. An incredulous Lower Creek chief known as the Cussita King responded that he would "look out for new friends" only when he was certain that Stuart and Governor Wright were dead.¹¹ In order to counter such a disposition among the Creeks and to keep the Committee of Inquiry informed of occurrences in the Indian towns, Galphin suggested to the South Carolina Council of Safety that a Patriot trader be sent to reside in the nation.¹²

One ingredient necessary for George Galphin's success was an abundance of ammunition. To provide this would be difficult. So scarce was powder and lead that the South Carolina Council had proposed that if Georgia supplied the Creeks, South Carolina would attempt to satisfy the Cherokee. Also, they suggested, any ammunition should be sent as a gift; thereby the tribesmen would be more indebted to the Americans than if

¹⁰ Bartram, *Travels*, 100; David Taitt to John Stuart, March 16, 1772, in Taitt, "Journal," Mereness, *Travels*, 524; Merchants Concerned in Trade to the Indian Country, Gage Papers, vol. 137 (Indian Treaties and Congresses), WLCL; Sir James Wright to John Stuart, July 6, 1775, *ibid.*, vol. 131, WLCL; Sir James Wright's Disbursements for Indian Affairs, July 5, 1775, in Allen D. Candler (ed.), *CRG Typescripts*, XXXVIII, pt. 2, pp. 107-108.

¹¹ Substance of a Talk from George Galphin to the Creek Nation, June 1775, CO5/76, 175.

¹² South Carolina Council to the Council of Safety in Georgia, July 24, 1775, in "Journal of the Council of Safety for South Carolina, June 16, 1775-July 26, 1775," *CSCHS* (Charleston, 1858), II, 60-61; and Extract of a letter from Robert Rae to Joshua Smith, n.d., CO5/94, 56.

a free trade were allowed. Galphin did not share this opinion, for he believed that "once they find the trade is stoped [*sic*] from them it will not be in the power of any Man to keep them peaceable Longer."¹³

While the several colony-states strove for implementation of individual Indian policies, the Continental Congress was not ignoring frontier problems. On July 12, 1775, a plan for the management of the Indians was proposed in Congress. The scheme would be somewhat similar to the British system, except that there would be three jurisdictional divisions rather than two. The boundaries of the areas would coincide with the territories of the Indian nations: the lands of the Six Nations and their allies composed the Northern Department; the Cherokee and the tribe living to the south constituted the Southern Department; and all other tribes were included in the Middle Department.¹⁴

For each division commissioners would be appointed, three each in the Northern and Middle departments, but five in the South because of distances and number of tribesmen. With regard to their responsibilities, Congress resolved "that the commissioners have power to treat with Indians in their respective departments, in the name and on behalf of the united colonies, in order to preserve peace and friendship with the said Indians, and to prevent their taking part in the present commotions."¹⁵ Instructed to watch closely the activities of the British emissaries, the commissioners were ordered to apprehend anyone guilty of stirring up the Indians.

That the intentions of the Congress regarding the natives might be clear, a talk was drafted that could be delivered by any of the commissioners to the tribes in their districts. According to the colonials, relations with the mother country had been

¹³ George Galphin to the Council at Savannah, Aug. 9, 1775, in "Papers of the First Council of Safety of the Revolutionary Party in South Carolina, June–November, 1775," *SCHGM* 1 (1900), 125; *ibid.*, 123; South Carolina Council to the Georgia Council, July 24, 1775, *CSCHS*, II, 60–61.

¹⁴ Worthington C. Ford (ed.), *JCC* (Washington, D. C., 1905–37), II, 123.

¹⁵ *JCC*, II, 175.

friendly and profitable to both since the beginning of colonization. Now the king's ministers were attempting to deprive the colonists of their hard-won livelihood. Their objections had fallen on deaf ears, for the monarch was listening to those who advised that force be used to quash the colonial protest. The Indians were advised to remain neutral in the dispute.

BROTHERS AND FRIENDS!

We desire you will hear and receive what we have now told you, and that you will open a good ear and listen to what we are now going to say. This is a family quarrel between us and Old England. You Indians are not concerned in it. We don't wish you to take up the hatchet against the king's troops. We desire you to remain at home, and not join on either side, but keep the hatchet buried deep. In the name and in behalf of all our people, we ask and desire you to love peace and maintain it, and to love and sympathise with us in our troubles; that the path may be kept open with all our people and yours, to pass and repass, without molestation.¹⁶

When Congress came to the task of naming the commissioners for the several districts, it faced the difficulty of making the appointments equitably while recognizing that certain provinces were more experienced and influential in Indian affairs. Accordingly, Pennsylvania and Virginia had representation in two departments, and South Carolina was given the privilege of naming three of the five appointees in the South. Appointed by Congress were General Philip Schuyler of New York, Major Joseph Hawley of Massachusetts, Turbot Francis of Pennsylvania, Oliver Wolcott of Connecticut, and Volkert P. Douw of New York for the Northern Department; Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Patrick Henry of Virginia, and James Wilson of Pennsylvania for the Middle Department; and John Walker

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 182. Richard Henry Lee believed that by these actions the Congress had "taken the most effectual measures to secure the friendship of the Indians all along our extensive frontiers. . . ." See Lee to Washington, Aug. 1, 1775, in George Washington, *The Writings of . . .*, ed. Jared Sparks (New York, 1847-48), I, 12-13.

of Virginia and Willie Jones of North Carolina for the Southern Department.¹⁷ Late in the summer of 1775 the South Carolina Council of Safety appointed George Galphin and Edward Wilkinson, already acting in a similar capacity for South Carolina, and Robert Rae, a business partner of Galphin who resided in Georgia, to fill the remaining vacancies.¹⁸

The first official task facing the Continental Indian commissioners in the South was to schedule a conference at Salisbury, North Carolina, for November. During the weeks preceding that meeting, Galphin and Wilkinson worked hard to bolster their waning influence with the Creeks and Cherokee.

Galphin's chief complaint was the shortage of supplies.¹⁹ Because of this he had already lost half the Upper Creek towns to the British and would lose the other half plus the Lower towns if he could not occasionally provide goods for the trade. Because the Indians knew that the Georgians had stores cached in Savannah, they were not receptive to his apologies about shortages. If provisions were not distributed after the meeting at Salisbury, concluded Galphin, the tribesmen would believe that the Patriots were niggardly liars.

Galphin had at least one sympathetic listener in Henry Laurens, the president of the South Carolina Council of Safety. Although Laurens backed Galphin's ideas, he was somewhat naive in his conception of forest diplomacy. He was certain that when Galphin met with some Lower Creek chiefs in October,

¹⁷ *JCC*, II, 183; Edmund C. Burnett (ed.), *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress* (Washington, D. C., 1921-36), I, 163n; *JCC*, II, 192, 194. In connection with the support given Willie Jones by North Carolina see William L. Saunders et al. (eds.), *NCCR* (Raleigh, 1886-1914), X, 180, 214, 925.

¹⁸ Henry Laurens to the Georgia Council of Safety, Sept. 29, 1775, Henry Laurens Papers and Letterbooks, Bundle 50, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.

¹⁹ George Galphin to the Council of Safety at Charles Town, Oct. 15, 1775, *SCHGM*, III, 7-9; same in Laurens Papers, Bundle 50; Henry Laurens to Galphin, Oct. 22, 1775, *SCHGM* 3 (1902), 9-10. Galphin's traders were impatient for goods and threatened to procure them in Pensacola if none were forthcoming. See Galphin to the Council of Safety at Charles Town, Oct. 15, 1775, *SCHGM* 3 (1902), 7-9.

all he needed to do was inform them of the Continental and provincial Indian establishments: "the novelty and dignity of this grand plan will excite their curiosity, strike them with awe and tend to confirm their resolutions to remain neuter at least till they shall learn and see the effects of the new arrangement. . . ." ²⁰ So important was this conference, thought Laurens, that Galphin should hold it even at the risk of missing the Salisbury meeting.

If Laurens' naiveté came from inexperience, that would change quickly, for he soon found himself deeply involved in Indian affairs. At the same time that he was in correspondence with George Galphin concerning supplies for the Creeks, he was attempting to provide that same precious commodity for the Cherokee. In the summer of 1775 a deputation headed by William H. Drayton had traveled into the backcountry under commission of the Council of Safety on a mission of twofold intention: to placate the Loyalists and to parley with the Cherokee. Neither venture had been totally successful but Drayton had returned insisting that a supply of ammunition would confirm the friendship of the several Cherokee chiefs with whom he had spoken. Henry Laurens and the council, hoping that a gift of ammunition would aid both South Carolina and the Continental commissioners, responded in early October by sending one thousand pounds of powder, with lead in proportion, to the Cherokee with whom Drayton had conferred. ²¹

Unfortunately, the powder and ball never reached the Cherokee. ²² First the wagon transporting it was detained at the

²⁰ Laurens to Galphin, Oct. 22, 1775, *SCHGM* 3 (1902), 9-10.

²¹ Same to the same, Oct. 4, 1775, *ibid.*, II, 105; Order for 1,000 pounds of powder for the use of the Cherokee delivered by Moses Cotter by the order of W. H. Drayton, Laurens Papers, Bundle 50. In connection with the Drayton mission see James H. O'Donnell (ed.), "A Loyalist View of the Drayton-Tennent-Hart Mission to the Upcountry," *SCHM* 67 (1966), 15-28.

²² Laurens to Edward Wilkinson, Oct. 24, 1775, *SCHGM*, III, 79; same to Lt. Col. William Thomson, Oct. 25, 1775, *ibid.*, 80-81; David Ramsay, *History of the Revolution of South Carolina* . . . (Trenton, N. J., 1785), 81; *The Georgia Gazette*, Dec. 20, 1775, 4 (microfilm, LC); and *The Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), June 20, 1776, 1 (microfilm, Duke Univ.). Con-

Congarees; the upcountry folk feared the warriors would choose to hunt frontiersmen instead of deer. When President Laurens and the council learned of the seizure, they immediately dispatched letters assuring the people that the powder had been sent only after "long and mature deliberation." Their decision had been based on the premise that a smaller amount of powder would be required to keep the Cherokee at peace than would be necessary to defeat them in battle. Apparently this explanation was satisfactory, for on October 31 the wagon resumed its journey. Hardly had it gotten underway, however, when it was halted again and its contents seized by a group of about one hundred and fifty armed Loyalists. Some five hundred Patriots then appeared on the scene, recaptured the wagon, and pursued the king's people. But when an additional two thousand Loyalists rallied to support those who had confiscated the ammunition, the provincials retreated.

In an effort to justify their action, the Loyalists circulated the rumor that the powder and lead had been sent out by the Patriots with the stipulation that the Cherokee use it in killing all those who supported the king. According to this tale, the Patriots "were to be distinguished by a Piece of Bear's Skin, a Deer's Tail, or a Piece of white Paper wore [*sic*] in their Hats, which was to be the Signal by which the Indians were to know them from the King's faithful subjects" ²³ The Council of Safety countered with the argument that the "Principles of humanity" were adequate evidence that they would not be guilty of issuing such an order. It would have served only to bring the warriors down on the frontiers, an occurrence which the council had been doing its utmost to prevent. ²⁴

If the Cherokee had no intentions before this incident of harming the Loyalists, the loss of the powder and lead gave

garees refers to the vicinity of Granby, South Carolina. See John Drayton, *Memoirs of the American Revolution* (Charleston, 1821), II, 116.

²³ *The South Carolina and American General Gazette*, Dec. 8, 1775, 2 (microfilm, Duke Univ.).

²⁴ Hemphill, *Extracts*, 139; Ramsay, *Revolution of South Carolina*, I, 71-76.

them grounds. So great was their disappointment that a few of the younger braves talked of revenge. On behalf of the Patriots, William H. Drayton attempted to placate the Cherokee. Richard Pearis, a trader of more notoriety than fame, was sent to explain the loss of the provisions, with the promise that any goods recaptured would be forwarded without delay. Too, the tribesmen should know "that the headmen of South Carolina are faithful to their engagements, and that they will not suffer their lawful authority to be trampled upon with impunity."²⁵

The loss of the powder was disheartening to the American officials trying to maintain amicable relations with the Indians, for the ammunition, so badly needed by the troops in all the colonies, was difficult to obtain. Too, these events in South Carolina would make the job of the Continental Indian commissioners more difficult. The paucity of supplies would force them to rely on "rum and good words," which were only partly effective at best.

On November 13, 1775, John Walker, Willie Jones, George Galphin, and Robert Rae met in Salisbury, North Carolina, to consider the proper measures for carrying out their responsibilities as commissioners to the Southern tribes. Edward Wilkinson, detained by the turmoil resulting from the seizure of the powder in South Carolina, did not arrive until the meeting had been completed. The four men present decided that the most feasible approach was to plan for parleys with both the Creeks and the Cherokee in the spring of 1776, conferring with the Cherokee on April 15 at Fort Charlotte, South Carolina, and with the Creeks on May 1 at Augusta, Georgia. There seemed no reason to attempt to approach the faraway Chickasaw and Choctaw at that time.²⁶ Since Galphin, Wilkinson, and Rae

²⁵ William H. Drayton to Richard Pearis, Nov. 8, 1775, Simms Laurens Letters (microfilm), South Caroliniana Library, Univ. of South Carolina, Columbia; Hemphill, *Extracts*, 107; and Alexander Cameron to John Stuart, Nov. 8, 1775, CO5/77, 81-83. A small quantity later retaken was sent to the Cherokee; see Col. Richard Richardson to Laurens, Jan. 2, 1776, Gibbes, *Documentary History*, I, 247.

²⁶ Proceedings of the Meeting at Salisbury, Robert Hamilton, Secretary,

were experienced traders, they were given the task of securing the goods necessary for distribution at the meetings, as well as any other presents which could be sent to the tribes from time to time. The merchandise would be paid for with drafts drawn on the South Carolina Council of Safety, which would in turn pass them onto the Continental treasury.

Before concluding their brief meeting, the commissioners prepared talks for delivery to the Cherokee by Wilkinson and to the Creeks by Galphin and Rae. The Patriots explained that they were the "beloved men" chosen by the "provinces in America" to superintend the Southern Department, invited the tribesmen to attend the spring meetings, and urged the Indians to ignore the British.²⁷

Although John Walker returned to Virginia confident that all was peaceful and would remain so, Galphin, Wilkinson, and Rae had to face the day-to-day difficulties of keeping that peace. Lest the Cherokee become impossible to deal with, Galphin managed to secure several hundred pounds of ammunition, sending part of it to the Overhills as a gift from the Savannah Council of Safety and lending the remainder to Wilkinson for the Lower Cherokee.²⁸

While the Continental Congress and its commissioners sought to reach an agreement with the Southern Indians, John Stuart and his deputies were endeavoring to keep them inclined toward the English cause. In July of 1775, David Taitt held a meeting with the Upper Creeks to present the British view of the dispute in America. In response the headmen promised to keep their people quiet during the conflict, despite their exas-

Nov. 13, 1775, Simms Laurens Papers (film), South Caroliniana Library; Council of Safety of South Carolina to George Clymer and Michael Hillegas, Dec. 31, 1775, PCC, no. 72, 347.

²⁷ Talk to the Cherokee in the Proceedings of the Meeting at Salisbury, Nov. 13, 1775, Simms Laurens Letters (film), South Caroliniana Library; Talk to the Creeks, CO5/94, 72.

²⁸ *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), Dec. 8, 1775, 2 (microfilm, Duke Univ.); and George Galphin to the South Carolina Council of Safety, Dec. 9, 1775, Simms Laurens Letters (film), South Caroliniana Library.

peration at the "Virginians" "for stoping [*sic*] their amunition [*sic*] and fighting the great King's people."²⁹ Journeying on to the Lower Creek villages for the same purpose, Taitt was dismayed at the cool reception given him. Here was evidence indeed of the exertions of the American agents.

From the superintendent, Taitt received word that if twenty pack horses were sent to Pensacola, they would be loaded with gifts for the Creeks. Moreover, wrote Stuart, he could provide about thirty horseloads of goods for the traders if they would come for them. With these supplies available, David Taitt might find his job less difficult.

John Stuart further supported his deputy by mollifying the tribes. Apologizing to the Creeks for the shortage of ammunition, he promised that plenty soon would come via Pensacola and Mobile, because goods no longer could come through South Carolina and Georgia. Stuart's explanation of the dispute between Britain and America was that "nothing is meant by it against you [the Creeks] or any other Nation of Red People, but to decide a Dispute amongst the white People themselves."³⁰

Alexander Cameron meantime was finding to his pleasure that his Cherokee charges were displeased with the colonial actions and the treatment of the British Indian agents. In August he had received a message from the Great Warrior which was "a hell of a talk—he and his people are very cross about the usage their father [Stuart] met with in Charles Town, and me at Long Canes being obliged to leave our houses."³¹ The Cherokee assured Cameron that they would die in his defense. If the disloyal colonials wanted war, the Indians would quickly prepare for it.

However bellicose the Indians, Superintendent Stuart intended to keep them out of the war at that time. In a talk sent to the Cherokee in late summer of 1775 he repeated the idea

²⁹ David Taitt to John Stuart, Aug. 1, 1775, CO5/76, 177.

³⁰ Talk of John Stuart to the Creeks, Aug. 15, 1775, CO5/76, 181.

³¹ Alexander Cameron to Andrew McLean, Aug. 16, 1775, Gibbes, *Documentary History*, I, 143.

contained in an earlier message to the Creeks. "There is a difference between the White people of England and the White people of America. This is a matter which does not concern you; they will decide it among themselves."³² The best interest of the tribe would be served by keeping the peace and rebuffing American overtures, for they really had nothing to offer.

John Stuart preferred to keep the Indians out of the war, but the British command, although not eager to use such "assassin-allies," realized that the time might come when the Indians would be useful. The commander in North America, General Thomas Gage, had brought the matter to the attention of Lord Dartmouth in June of 1775. Because the rebels were themselves seeking the services of the Indians, reasoned Gage, "we need not be tender of calling upon the Savages . . ."³³ Dartmouth agreed. He responded by asking Gage to advise Colonel Guy Johnson, the superintendent of the Northern Indian District, on the use of the warriors, and to forward goods to Johnson for that purpose. The colonial secretary also wrote to Johnson, instructing him to enlist his charges against the rebels. Since Dartmouth gave no explicit instructions concerning the Southern Indians, General Gage followed the spirit of the orders to Guy Johnson in urging that John Stuart spare no expense in maintaining the support of the Southern tribes. Stuart was "when opportunity offers to make them take arms against his Majesty's Enemies, and to distress them [the colonists] all in their power, for no terms is [*sic*] now to be kept with them."³⁴

Although the Southern Indian superintendent assured Gage of his obedience, his interpretation was that "opportunity"

³² Talk of John Stuart to the Cherokee, Aug. 30, 1775, CO5/76, 179.

³³ In Thomas Gage, *The Correspondence of . . . , 1763-1775*, ed. Clarence Carter (New Haven, 1931), I, 404.

³⁴ Lord Dartmouth to Gage, Aug. 2, 1775, in Historical Manuscripts Commission, Fourteenth Report, Appendix, part X, HMC, *Dartmouth Mss.*, II, *American Papers*, 345; Dartmouth to Sir Guy Johnson, July 24, 1775, *ibid.*, Gage to John Stuart, Sept. 12, 1775, CO5/76, 187. In connection with Stuart's future work in Florida see Gage to Dartmouth, Sept. 20, 1775, Gage, *Correspondence*, I, 415.

would be offered best when the warriors could act in support of troops.³⁵ No good could come from a series of indiscriminate attacks. A wanton slaughter would only make the rebels more intractable and turn some Loyalists against the king's cause. John Stuart could see no advantage in using the Indians until it could be done in such a way as to damage the American cause materially.

Stuart's attempts to keep the tribesmen supplied and happy were frustrated from time to time by the Patriots. Provisions for his use were seized by his adversaries, forcing him to additional expense when he replaced the lost supplies. Indeed, the superintendent was shocked, puzzled, and dismayed when some Georgians waylaid a Lower Creek chief returning to his village laden with British presents. If the Americans truly were interested in keeping the peace, reasoned Stuart, they would not resort to such tactics.³⁶

Despite his difficulties, John Stuart was convinced that the tribes south of the Ohio were loyal to him. That this state of affairs might remain unchanged, he planned to send his brother as his personal representative to visit the Creeks and the Cherokee. Henry Stuart would carry to each tribe a supply of powder and lead as well as messages from the superintendent. In writing to the colonial secretary of his brother's journey, Superintendent Stuart tried to make Dartmouth aware that only by such missions and by sending supplies could the natives be kept loyal.³⁷

But John Stuart certainly knew that more than supplies would be needed. The long-standing feud between the Choctaw and the Creeks would need to be reconciled before the warriors from those tribes would be free to aid the British. Before the

³⁵ Stuart to Gage, Oct. 3, 1775, in Peter Force (ed.), *American Archives. Fourth Series* (Washington, D. C., 1837-46), IV, 317; Stuart to Cameron, Dec. 16, 1775, CO5/77, 28.

³⁶ Stuart to Dartmouth, Sept. 17, 1775, CO5/76, 172; same to the same, Oct. 25, 1775, *ibid.*, 183; Talk from the chiefs of the Lower Creeks to Stuart, Sept. 29, 1775, CO5/77, 58.

³⁷ Stuart to Dartmouth, Dec. 17, 1775, CO5/77, 22.

rebellion it had been wise to foment the conflict, creating division among the Indians. Now the dispute would have to be settled. Otherwise the villages would be at the mercy of the raiding enemy tribes while the braves were fighting the Americans. John Stuart's confidence that he could effect a truce was based on two factors: the esteem in which he was held by the two tribes and, perhaps more importantly, the fact that the two tribes were tired of the war. One Upper Creek chief had begged the superintendent to stop the fighting, exclaiming that "we in this part of the nation are made very poor by so long a War not being able to hunt, to feed, and Cloath our Women and Children as we used to do, and as the rest of our nation can now do."³⁸

The question of this peace was raised by Stuart when he, along with Governor Patrick Tonyn of East Florida, met some Lower Creek chiefs at St. Augustine in December of 1775.³⁹ Little more than mention was made, however, because the major concern at this meeting was to induce those headmen present to pledge their loyalty. The superintendent went to great lengths to blame everything on the Americans. Pay no attention to the American commissioners, he advised; they were mere traders, not "Beloved Men." To demonstrate the rewards of loyalty to the king, John Stuart distributed supplies and gunpowder to those in attendance.

On the occasion of this conference Stuart and Tonyn managed to cooperate. At other times they would be at extreme odds. The rather opinionated Tonyn would accuse Stuart of suspiciousness and inactivity. Actually, Patrick Tonyn was jeal-

³⁸ Talk from Niaha Thlaco, Oct. 20, 1775, *ibid.*, 48.

³⁹ Stuart to Dartmouth, Dec. 17, 1775, *ibid.*, 22; Talk of Stuart to the Lower Creeks, Dec. 4, 1775, *ibid.*, 24; Patrick Tonyn to Dartmouth, Nov. 3, 1775, CO5/556 (film from LC), 129; same to the same, Dec. 1775, *ibid.*, 141-45; Stuart to the Lower Creeks, Dec. 4, 1775, Henry Clinton Papers, WLCL; Tonyn to the Creeks, Dec. 6, 1775, CO5/556, 149-54; Talk of the Creeks to Tonyn, Dec. 7, 1775, *ibid.*, 157; Tonyn to the Pumpkin King and Kaligy, Dec. 8, 1775, *ibid.*, 161-63; Two Chiefs to Tonyn, Dec. 8, 1775, *ibid.*, 165-66; Tonyn to Germain, June 10, 1776, *ibid.*, 621-22; Tonyn to Clinton, June 4, 1776, *ibid.*, 683-88.

ous of the superintendent's influence with the Indians and seized every opportunity to criticize him.

On the basis of what he had learned of the disposition of the Indians, the intentions of the Loyalists in the South, and his orders from General Gage, John Stuart decided late in 1775 that perhaps the time had come to have the warriors act. Accordingly, he ordered David Taitt and Alexander Cameron to enlist the Creeks and Cherokee in support of "such of His Majesty's faithful Subjects as may have already taken or shall hereafter take arms, to resist the lawless Oppression of the Rebels and their attempts to overthrow the Constitution and oppose His Majesty's authority."⁴⁰ In the course of their efforts to recruit, the deputies were at liberty to promise that Stuart would supply the tribes with provisions and war materials. But, warned John Stuart, he was emphatically opposed to a general and indiscriminate attack on the frontier.

Thus, by the end of 1775 two Indian policies had emerged. In the new year both would be tested and found wanting. The British policy of friendship with limited military action as its goal would fail, largely because it was a halfway measure. The American approach of friendship with neutrality as its goal would fail also, in part because it was too little, too late, but more than that, because the long-accumulating grievances held against the colonials could not be forgiven easily. The Cherokee, angry with the American settlers and supplied by the British, though not explicitly encouraged in their actions in 1776, took up the war axe. Before the year was out they would have cause for bitter regret.

⁴⁰ Stuart to Taitt, Dec. 15, 1775, CO5/77, 30; same to Cameron, Dec. 16, 1775, *ibid.*, 28.

II. THE CHEROKEE WAR OF 1776



Throughout 1775 John Stuart had promised that he would supply the Southern tribes with provisions. When these precious commodities were slow in coming, one eager band of Cherokee undertook the long journey to St. Augustine in search of the superintendent early in 1776. Along with the other Southern tribes they believed that Stuart was "the person to supply the wants of the upper and lower Creeks and likewise the Cherokees and we are all very sensible to whom we are to apply when in want."¹

This attitude on the part of the tribesmen and Stuart's apparent ability to supply them troubled the superintendent's American rivals. George Galphin finally had resorted to threats of resignation before he could wrest a thousand pounds of powder away from the South Carolina Council of Safety. Even a plan outlined by the Continental Congress for providing trade goods afforded Galphin little cheer. He knew the scheme might never be fulfilled.² Congress in early 1776 proposed obtaining

¹ Stuart to Dartmouth, Jan. 6, 1776, CO5/77, 67; same to the same, Jan. 11, 1776, *ibid.*, 68; Talk of the Chiefs of the Lower Towns [Cherokee] to Party going to East Florida, Nov. 8, 1776, *ibid.*, 85-86; Talk from Emistisiguo and the Upper Creek Chiefs to John Stuart, March 2, 1775, CO5/77, 132-33; Talk of the Lower Creeks to Stuart, March 23, 1776, *ibid.*, 130-31.

² Henry Laurens to George Galphin, Feb. 14, 1776, SCHGM 4 (1903), 88-89; same to the Provincial Council of North Carolina, Feb. 14, 1776,

goods abroad, determining their prices, and regulating both the trade and the traders. John Stuart could have given some advice about the last proposal, but no doubt he was not consulted.

While the Americans sought the means to counter Stuart, that gentleman strove to send the warriors against the king's enemies. His instructions of late 1775 to Taitt and Cameron for committing the gunmen in support of the Loyalists had never been fulfilled. The premature rising by some of the king's friends which ended among the timbers of Moore's Creek Bridge near Wilmington, North Carolina, in early 1776 had dashed the hopes of the Southern Loyalists and, correspondingly, the plans of the British Indian officials.

Superintendent Stuart's next possible opportunity for involving the warriors in battle would come during the spring of 1776. General Henry Clinton had come southward, hoping for an early rendezvous with a fleet out from England under Sir Peter Parker. Their combined forces would then strike a strategic point on the Southern coast. But when Clinton arrived off Cape Fear in February, he did not find a fleet waiting. It was the general who had to wait, battling sand flies and ennui for nearly three months. During this period John Stuart came northward, seeking instructions about the use of the Indians.

In the meetings of Stuart, Clinton, and the general's staff, consideration was given to a plan calling for a thrust into the backcountry from the Gulf.³ Certain Loyalists had asserted that

ibid., 89-90; Letter to the Editor, *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), March 29, 1776, 1; JCC, IV, 96-97; Diary of Richard Smith, Jan. 27, 1776, in Burnett, *Letters*, I, 332; The Committee of Secret Correspondence to Silas Deane, March 3, 1776, *ibid.*, 375.

³ William B. Willcox, *Portrait of a General: Sir Henry Clinton in the War of Independence* (New York, 1964), 77-85; Tonym to Taitt, April 20, 1776, CO5/556, 631; Stuart to Clinton, May 9, 1776, CO5/77, 111; State of His Majesty's Council in East Florida, March 25, 1776, CO5/556, 561; Frederick Mulcaster to Clinton [1776], Clinton Papers, WLCL; Heads of Topics to be discussed with Stuart, Ennis [Innes], and Mulcaster, April 16, 1776, *ibid.*; Stuart to Clinton, May 8, 1776, *ibid.*; same to the same, March 15, 1776, *ibid.*; Clinton to Sir Peter Parker, May 6, 1776, *ibid.*; same to Richard Reeve, May 8, 1776, *ibid.*; Stuart to Germain, March 5, 1778, CO5/79, 134.

a detachment of troops marched into the Southwest would rally the Indians and encourage the king's friends in the backcountry. But the superintendent was hesitant, as he explained to Clinton. Experienced rivermen would be needed to get the troops north from the Gulf, the Indians would be extremely wary of such a movement through their territory, and there was the danger that the Americans might strike westward and spoil the venture. Too, Stuart was jealous. Lest the military steal all the glory, he insisted that he and his deputies be given military rank in the event of such an operation. The consensus of the staff meetings being that the plan was fraught with difficulty, the matter was dropped. Discussions such as these and similar Loyalist plans gave rise to cries of collusion when the Cherokee outbreaks of 1776 coincided with the British fiasco at Charlestown, but such was not the case.⁴

While John Stuart conferred with the military officials, his brother (serving in the department as deputy superintendent) made his way into the Indian country. The superintendent had sent explicit orders to Henry Stuart about the conduct of his mission: "You will understand that an indiscriminate attack upon the Provinces is not meant but to act in the execution of any concerted plan and to assist His Majesty's Troops and Friends in Distressing the Rebels and bringing them to a sense of their Duty."⁵

The superintendent's intentions notwithstanding, the tone of these instructions, coupled with the fact that Henry Stuart would take with him five thousand pounds of powder and lead, was to incite the Indians and fuel Patriot propaganda mills. Both the Southern Indians and the Americans would assume that John Stuart desired immediate, unrestricted action against the frontier.

⁴ For contemporary opinion about the existence of such a plot see Henry Laurens to John Laurens, Aug. 14, 1776, in Henry Laurens, *A South Carolina Protest Against Slavery* (New York, 1861), 26-27; Ramsay, *Revolution of South Carolina*, I, 334-35.

⁵ John Stuart's Instructions to Henry Stuart, Oct. 24, 1775, CO5/76, 189; same to Gage, Oct. 24, 1775, CO5/77, 60.

Originally Henry Stuart had planned to sail from St. Augustine to Pensacola and proceed from there through the Creek villages to the Cherokee country. High waters and an eruption of the old Choctaw-Creek feud altered this. Instead of setting out from Pensacola, Stuart and his party sailed around to Mobile. There to his surprise he found a band of Cherokee led by the irascible Dragging Canoe. After listening to a long harangue about the war, the curtailment of the trade, white encroachment on Indian lands, and the cowardice of the Cherokee elder statesmen, Henry Stuart persuaded the headstrong young chief and his followers to accompany the pack train on its journey north.⁶

On April 24, 1776, the deputy superintendent and his entourage reached Chote. Immediately Henry Stuart conferred with Alexander Cameron; then the two officials met with the Cherokee headmen. After listening to loud complaints about the settlers who encroached upon tribal lands, the two departmental representatives proposed an attempt at mediation of the dispute. In the meantime, requested Cameron and Stuart, the Cherokee should keep the peace.⁷ Of course these admonitions were weakened somewhat by the distribution of the twenty-one horseloads of ammunition brought by Henry Stuart.

Alexander Cameron and Henry Stuart wrote to the settlers at Watauga and Nolichucky, sending along a talk from the chiefs demanding withdrawal by the settlers within twenty days. A trader named Isaac Thomas took these messages and returned within ten days, bearing replies in which the white men promised to move as soon as "times altered" sufficiently to allow this. But, in addition, Thomas reported a strange incident. Indeed the dispatches had been read, but the letter from Stuart and Cameron had been transcribed and altered before being sent on to other settlements. In Thomas' words this transcription was described as "very different from the original

⁶ Henry Stuart's Report to the superintendent of his travels in the Indian country, Aug. 1776, *NCCR*, X, 763-85; Henry Stuart to John Stuart, May 7, 1776, CO5/77, 145.

⁷ Cameron to John Stuart, June 3, 1776, CO5/77, 175.

and that it was sent to one of the committees [Committee of Safety for Fincastle County] in Virginia."⁸

The forgery reported by Thomas was a bit of canny forest diplomacy. The astute frontiersmen believed that the Indians had passed the point of reasoning. Since war was coming, the settlers could strengthen their appeals for assistance if they could convince the Easterners that British agents had incited the Cherokee. Thus the altered version of the Cameron-Stuart letter outlined a plan in which the Indians and Loyalists would attack the frontier, the houses of the king's friends conspicuously marked so as to give them immunity. From the settlements of southwest Virginia, this incendiary propaganda went on to be read in the state legislature, published in the *Virginia Gazette*, and discussed by members of the Continental Congress.⁹ The frontiersmen accomplished their purpose.

Considering the nature of the letter, it is little wonder that the Committee of Safety for Fincastle County accused the British agents of provoking war from the "meanest motives of Interest and Revenge." Toward the Cherokee they were equally harsh: "We are sorry to say this unprovoked Conduct so Contrary to your former Behaviour plainly shows that your Hearts are not good, and that you want some pretence to break off all Connection with your former Friends and allies."¹⁰

Before receiving this reprimand from the folk in Fincastle, the Cherokee had sent a second message to the settlers at Wa-

⁸ Henry Stuart and Alexander Cameron to the Wataugans, May 7, 1776, CO5/77, 143; John Carter to Alexander Cameron and Henry Stuart, May 13, 1776, *ibid.*, 149; Report of Isaac Thomas, NCCR, X, 769.

⁹ Force, *American Archives. Fourth Series*, VI, 1554; Elbridge Gerry to Joseph Trumbull, June 18, 1776, Burnett, *Letters*, I, 498; *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), June 7, 1776, 3; Charles Lee, "Lee Papers, 1776-1778," New York Historical Society, *Collections* (New York, 1873), V, 28-30. See Henry Stuart's attempt to clear himself of the charges in his letter to Edward Wilkinson, June 28, 1776, CO5/77, 156. For the attitude of the frontiersmen toward the British officials, see Arthur Campbell to "Dear Brother," June 18, 1776, in the Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers, I, LC.

¹⁰ Talk from the Committee of Fincastle in Virginia to the Cherokee Indians, n.d. [1776], CO5/77, 193.

tauga and Nolichucky. Brushing aside all explanations and delays, the natives demanded withdrawal of the settlers within twenty days.¹¹ It was only at the insistence of Cameron and Stuart that the second letter had been sent extending the period allowed for removal. The Cherokee knew that the settlers had no intention of leaving; the frontiersmen were only stalling for time in order to prepare for the onslaught which they knew was coming. By mid-June Alexander Cameron and Henry Stuart admitted failure. Despite all their exertions to the contrary, they could no longer restrain the Cherokee.

While the British worked toward their goal of armed peace during the first half of 1776, the Americans labored toward neutralization of the tribes. The first official opportunity for the Southern Indian commissioners to do this was at the conferences scheduled with the Cherokee in April and the Creeks in May.¹²

On April 15, 1776, Willie Jones, John Walker, George Galphin, Robert Rae, and Edward Wilkinson were present at Fort Charlotte, South Carolina, as scheduled, but it was a week before any Cherokee straggled in. The delegates who did come could hardly be regarded as representative because they were emissaries of the Lower and Valley settlements only; the Overhills sent messages declining the invitation and warning their fellow tribesmen to come home. Willie Jones correctly concluded that however peaceful the other divisions of the nation, if the Overhill Cherokee went to war, the rest of the tribe would join them. Too, he believed that "whenever any one of the Southern colonies shall be attacked on the Sea Coast, they [the Cherokee] will attack the same province on the frontier."¹³

¹¹ Henry Stuart and Alexander Cameron to John Carter and the Inhabitants of Watauga, May 23, 1776, CO5/77, 153.

¹² Galphin to Thomas Graham, March 13, 1776, CO5/94, 66; *SCHGM* 4 (1903), 212-13; £3,000 in goods for the Continental Congress, Aug. 22, 1776, South Carolina Treasury, Public Ledger, 1775-77, p. 117, South Carolina Archives, Columbia.

¹³ Willie Jones to Richard Caswell, June 12, 1776, *NCCR*, XXII, 743; Robert Rae to Thomas Graham, May 8, 1776, CO5/94, 76-77.

Following the meeting with the Creeks in May, Jones was not so pessimistic, although again the commissioners met with only a part of the tribe. On May 1, Jones, Galphin, and Rae waited in Augusta; fifteen days later some Creeks arrived. When the parleys began, neutrality was the theme emphasized by the Patriots. Grateful though they were for the assistance given by some Creek warriors "not long since present at a small skirmish between our People and the red coats at Savannah . . .," the Americans asked that such actions not be repeated.¹⁴

As usual the Creeks entered a list of grievances—the trade was still closed to them, forts were being built on the frontier close to their lands, and en route to the parley their delegation had been attacked by whites, with one of the Creeks killed. The three commissioners really could offer little by way of explanation. They were sorry about the murdered warrior, sorry too about the necessity of the forts. As the Americans explained, the stockades were for defensive purposes; if there were no attacks on the frontier the posts would pose no threat to the Creeks.¹⁵

However optimistic the Southern Indian commissioners, the meetings held in the spring of 1776 afforded no real hope for peace. That the meetings even took place was more a testimony to the factionalism of the tribes than to the influence of Galphin, Rae, and others. Nothing they could say or do would keep the tribesmen from war if such was the course they chose.

The Cherokee were angry with the Americans because of frontier land encroachment. Further disturbed by the breakdown between the colonies and the mother country, agitated by the fulminations of Dragging Canoe, armed by the British, they awaited only a final push to send them running. That came in

¹⁴ Journal of the negotiations with the Cherokee, Fort Charlotte, South Carolina, April 1776, and a Journal of the negotiations with the Creeks at Augusta, May 1776, Raleigh; Taitt to John Stuart, July 7, 1776, CO5/77, 163; Laurens to the Committee at George Town, March 15, 1776, SCHGM, IV, 204.

¹⁵ Alden, *John Stuart*, 301–305; Georgia Council of Safety, May 1776, in Allen D. Candler (ed.), *RRG* (Atlanta, 1908), I, 128–29; Council of Safety to Galphin, May 15, 1776, *ibid.*, 125.

May of 1776. A delegation of Northern Indians—Shawnee, Delaware, and Mohawk—arrived in the Cherokee country preaching war. Painted black and bringing belts of black wampum, the trans-Ohio tribesmen reported Patriot designs against all the Indians and urged the Cherokee to join the common resistance.¹⁶ Accepting the symbolic black wampum, the Cherokee promised action. Within six weeks they would harry the frontiers from Virginia to Georgia.

Between mid-May and late June, the Cherokee laid their plans. Against the northern sector of the frontier the Overhills would strike, the other divisions against the middle and southern sectors. The Overhill warriors would be divided into two major parties, one led by the Great Warrior striking at Watauga and Nolichucky, the other directed by Dragging Canoe against the Carter's Valley and Holston folk. Bands from the Lower and Middle Towns would raid the Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina settlements. As the Cherokee outlined their tactics, Alexander Cameron urged moderation, but this was a useless, face-saving gesture on his part.¹⁷

Happily for the transmontane settlers who would absorb the heaviest blows, word leaked out about the Cherokee plans, depriving the Indians of the advantage of surprise. Informed by Isaac Thomas and other Patriot traders of the coming attacks, the settlers at Nolichucky, Watauga, and Eaton's Station (near the Long Island of the Holston) hastily threw up stockades into which they crowded their families to await the onslaught.¹⁸

¹⁶ Henry Stuart's Report . . . , Aug. 20, 1776, CO5/77, 169–89.

¹⁷ John Stuart to Germain, Aug. 23, 1776, CO5/77, 126–29; same to the Great Warrior, Feb. 6, 1777, PCC, no. 71, II, 201–03; Lewis P. Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746–1786* (Richmond, 1903), 223; *The Virginia Gazette*, (Purdie), Aug. 2, 1776, 1.

¹⁸ Gilbert Christian to William Preston, May 16, 1776, Lyman C. Draper Collections, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Preston Papers (microfilm, Duke Univ.), I, 25; Anthony Bledsoe to William Preston, May 14, 1775, *ibid.*, IV, 39; William Preston to Edmund Pendleton, June 15, 1776, *ibid.*, IV, 50. The Lyman C. Draper Collections hereinafter cited as Draper Colls., with the film depository noted after the series and page references as either (Duke) or (UNC).

They also sent urgent appeals eastward requesting assistance from North Carolina and Virginia.

Because the North Carolina-Virginia boundary had not been run west of the Blue Ridge, no one was certain which state was responsible for the transmontane settlements. Several factors made Virginia their protector: they were tied to that state by the natural transportation routes; the same natural routes meant the counties of southwestern Virginia were especially vulnerable to attack; and the state had to protect the important Chiswell's lead mines.¹⁹ Consequently, six companies of frontier militia under Colonel William Russell, augmented by militia from Fincastle County, were sent to patrol the southwestern frontier. In North Carolina the reaction of the officials to the pleas for help was to instruct the frontier militia commander to be vigilant. But he was not to cross the boundary into Indian territory unless the warriors attacked first.²⁰

It would not be long before more than vigilance would be needed all along the frontier. Late in June parties from the Lower Towns raced through the South Carolina backcountry, destroying property, taking prisoners, and killing settlers. Before July was over Cherokee attacks on the North Carolina frontier along the Catawba River killed thirty-seven people. Late the same month the Overhills were in motion against the transmontane settlements.²¹ Sweeping through the hated outposts,

¹⁹ William Preston to Edmund Pendleton, June 15, 1776, Draper Colls., Preston Papers (Duke), IV, 50; William Fleming to Thomas Jefferson, June 15, 1776, in Thomas Jefferson, *The Papers of . . .*, ed. Julian P. Boyd, et al., 16 vols. (Princeton, 1950-1961), I, 386; same to the Council of Virginia, Aug. 2, 1776, Draper Colls., Virginia Papers (UNC), II, 77-78; Journal of the Committee of Safety of Virginia, June 20, 1776, Palmer, VIII, 213; William Russell to William Preston, July 17, 1776, Draper Colls., Preston Papers (Duke), II, 51; same to the same, July 23, 1776, *ibid.*, 8; William Preston to the President of the Council [Virginia], Aug. 2, 1776, *ibid.*, IV, 64.

²⁰ North Carolina Council to Griffith Rutherford, June 24, 1776, *NCCR*, XI, 303; Rutherford to the Committee of Safety, June 24, 1776, *ibid.*; North Carolina Council to Samuel Johnston, July 22, 1776, *ibid.*, XI, 31-321; same to the North Carolina Delegates in Congress, June 24, 1776, *ibid.*, X, 301.

²¹ Deposition of David Shettroe, June 30, 1776, in Force, *American Archives. Fourth Series*, VI, 1229; Rutherford to the North Carolina Coun-

the Overhill warriors destroyed buildings but caused little loss of life because the majority of the settlers had taken refuge in the stockades. Near the post at Eaton's Station, Dragging Canoe's party fought a sharp encounter with the frontiersmen before withdrawing. The Great Warrior, meantime, led his gunmen in a siege of Fort Caswell near Watauga which lasted until a relief column from Virginia drew near.

Although none of the initial Cherokee attacks could be judged overwhelming successes, the warriors had not gone home to skulk in their lodges. They continued to carry torch and axe against the Southern frontier in numbers of sorties. Stories of resulting pillage and death sent a thrill of alarm along the entire frontier in the South. The less hardy would probably withdraw to more settled areas.²² The activities of the Cherokee were all the more alarming since it was possible that they would be joined by the Creeks.

Those experienced in frontier warfare believed that the surest way to stop the Cherokee attacks and prevent Creek action was to launch a powerful punitive expedition into the Cherokee country. Such a venture would be most effective if the four Southern states involved cooperated. Since the Southern seacoast was free from the threat of invasion for the moment, the Patriots could concentrate their efforts against the Cherokee. A successful campaign on the frontier might diminish the danger from that quarter during any future British invasion on the seacoast. The commander of the Continental forces in the South, General Charles Lee, strongly urged such action, even though he was unable to send any troops. The plan subse-

cil, July 12, 1776, *NCCR*, X, 662; same to the same, July 14, 1776, *ibid.*, 669; *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), Aug. 24, 1776, 7; William Russell to William Preston, July 17, 1776, Draper Colls., Preston Papers (Duke), II, 51; "Account by militia captains of battle fought near Eaton's Station, July 20, 1776," *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), Aug. 3, 1776, 2; Samuel C. Williams, *Tennessee During the Revolutionary War* (Nashville, 1944), 28-29; *The Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), Aug. 10, 1776, 6; *ibid.*, Aug. 17, 1776, 2.

²² Archibald Cary to William Preston, July 31, 1776, Draper Colls., Preston Papers (Duke), IV, 62.

quently agreed upon by the Carolinas and Virginia, Georgia being unable to participate, called for South Carolina to destroy the Lower towns, the two Carolinas to level the Middle and Valley towns, and Virginia to lay waste the Overhill towns.²³

Long before the states agreed to this cooperative expedition, South Carolina had responded to the Cherokee raids with force. Despite the confusion lingering in the state from the Clinton-Parker attack at Charlestown, the frontier militia leaders set about mustering men to pursue the Cherokee.²⁴ The officials of the state government agreed that the Cherokee had to be punished severely; one even urged that they be pushed over the mountains. By the end of July, Colonel Andrew Williamson of the South Carolina militia had managed to raise six hundred militia, a battalion of Continentals, and twenty Catawba scouts,

²³ Gen. Andrew Lewis to Gen. Charles Lee, May 27, 1776, Charles Lee, "Papers," V, 43; Lee to Edmund Pendleton, July 7, 1776, Charles Lee Letterbook, July 2-Aug. 27, 1776, South Caroliniana Library; Lee to the President of the Provincial Council of North Carolina, July 7, 1776, *ibid.*; same to Archibald Bullock, July 18, 1776, *ibid.*; Cornelius Harnett to Lee, July 16, 1776, Miscellaneous Papers, Series I, Raleigh; Funds Paid Thomas Gray and his brother as linguists [interpreters] to the Creek Nation, Commissioners of the Treasury Journal, 1778-1787, South Carolina Archives; John Rutledge to the President of the Virginia Convention, July 7, 1776, PCC, no. 71, I, 41; Lee to the Virginia Convention, July 7, 1776, *ibid.*, 45-56; North Carolina Council to John Rutledge, July 16, 1776, *NCCR*, XI, 316-17; same to Lee, July 16, 1776, *ibid.*; Cornelius Harnett to Patrick Henry, July 21, 1776, *ibid.*, I, 47-48; *JCC*, V, 16. Georgia did not join the combined operation, but she did send a few men against the Cherokee towns nearest her border. See *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), Sept. 14, 1776, 4; *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, Aug. 21, 1776, 3; Galphin to Timothy Barnard, Aug. 18, 1776, CO5/78, 51.

²⁴ Robert Rae to [Archibald Bullock], n.d., in John Almon (ed.), *The Remembrancer* (London, 1775-1784), IV, 49-50; Francis Salvador to William H. Drayton, July 18, 1776, Gibbes, *Documentary History*, II, 24-26; John Drayton, *Memoirs*, II, 341; Andrew Williamson to ———, July 22, 1776, Gibbes, *Documentary History*, II, 26-27; James Cresswell to William H. Drayton, July 27, 1776, *ibid.*, 30-31; *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), Sept. 27, 1776, 2; A. S. Salley (ed.), *Journal of the General Assembly of South Carolina, September 17, 1776-October 20, 1776* (Columbia, 1909), 124; William H. Drayton to Francis Salvador, July 24, 1776, Gibbes, *Documentary History*, II, 28-29.

a total of 1,120 men. Late in that month his forces were first put in motion in an attempt to capture Alexander Cameron, who was reportedly at the head of one of the raiding parties. Williamson and his men fought a determined skirmish with the Indians, destroying a town in the process, but they failed to catch Cameron.²⁵

On August 2, Williamson and his army began their sweep through the Cherokee Lower towns. Within ten days the South Carolinians had completed a circuit of the towns during which they "burnt every town, and destroyed all the corn from the Cherokee line to the Middle settlement . . ." ²⁶ Returning to the frontier for rest, Williamson sought to know the state of preparations in North Carolina. Writing to General Griffith Rutherford, Williamson proposed a joint onslaught against the Middle towns in late August.²⁷

General Rutherford received Williamson's letter in his camp on the North Carolina frontier. To the South Carolinian he could report two thousand men under arms, but shortages of horses and provisions, particularly lead and salt, necessary for the arduous march into the mountain valleys, delayed his departure. He, too, wrote Rutherford, pursued Alexander Cameron, or at least his ghost. But like Williamson, he met no success in capturing the British official.²⁸

²⁵ *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), Sept. 27, 1776, 2.

²⁶ Journal of an Expedition in 1776 against the Cherokee, under the Command of Captain Peter Clinton, Draper Colls., Thomas Sumter Papers (Duke), III, 164-75; Prisoners sent to Charles Town by Colonel Richardson, Gibbes, *Documentary History*, I, 249; Richard Richardson to Henry Laurens, Dec. 16, 1775, *ibid.*, I, 241; Andrew Williamson to Griffith Rutherford, Aug. 14, 1776, *NCCR*, X, 745-48.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Williamson to Rutherford; Williamson to William H. Drayton, Aug. 22, 1776, Gibbes, *Documentary History*, II, 32.

²⁸ North Carolina Council to Rutherford, July 16, 1776, *NCCR*, XI, 317; same to the same, July 21, 1776, *ibid.*, 318-19; Minutes of the North Carolina Council, July 23, 1776, *ibid.*, X, 683; North Carolina Council to William Sharpe, July 24, 1776, *ibid.*, XI, 328; same to John Butler, July 31, 1776, *ibid.*, 335; Martin Armstrong to Major Joseph Winston, July 13, 1776, Draper Colls., King's Mountain Papers (UNC), VI, 88; Cornelius Harnett to the Council, Aug. 30, 1776, *NCCR*, X, 787; North Carolina Council to

While the commanders from the Carolinas attempted to synchronize their movements, the leader of the Virginia expedition sought to organize his army. Not appointed until August 1, Colonel William Christian had to correlate the movements of a battalion of Continentals under Colonel Charles Lewis, three hundred militia from North Carolina, five hundred militia from the Virginia frontier counties, and the three hundred rangers led by Colonel William Russell who were already at the frontier. Once his army was gathered, Christian was to see that the Overhills were punished, cooperating with the other state expeditions if possible.²⁹

By the time that plans for this third part of the movement against the Cherokee were under way, the Indians already regretted their rash action. Refugees from the ruined Lower towns were spreading their tales of woe throughout the nation, prophesying that the Middles, Valleys, and Overhills would meet the same fate. Alexander Cameron now found himself the advocate of continued warfare rather than the apostle of restraint. Cameron urged Superintendent Stuart, who was by now also a reluctant supporter of the Cherokee war effort, to persuade the Creeks to enter the conflict.³⁰

As the Cherokee troubled with their second thoughts, the

General Moore, Aug. 3, 1776, *NCCR*, XI, 338; same to John Page, Aug. 1776, *ibid.*; Rutherford to William Christian, July 5, 1776 [Aug. 5, 1776], *ibid.*, X, 650.

²⁹ H. R. McIlwaine (ed.), *JCSV* (Richmond, 1931-32), I, 82; John Page to the North Carolina Council, July 26, 1776, in H. R. McIlwaine (ed.), *Official Letters of the Governors of the State of Virginia* (Richmond, 1926-1929), I, 16; Page to William Preston, July 26, 1776, Preston Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society; Resolution of the Virginia House of Delegates, Nov. 20, 1776, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, I, 77; William Campbell to Arthur Campbell, Aug. 1, 1776, Draper Colls., King's Mountain Papers (UNC), IX, 4; John Page to William Fleming, Aug. 1776, Draper Colls., Frontier Wars Papers (Duke), I, 30; same to John Hancock, Aug. 3, 1776, PCC, no. 71, I, 53; William Christian to Griffith Rutherford, Aug. 18, 1776, in "Virginia Legislative Papers," *VMHB* 16 (1908), 173.

³⁰ Cameron to John Stuart, Aug. 31, 1776, CO5/78, 22; Stuart to Germain, Aug. 23, 1776, CO5/77, 126-29; same to the same, Nov. 24, 1776, CO5/78, 72.

Southern Patriots prepared to convince them of the foolishness of their action. Early in September, Colonel William Christian and a part of his complement reached their appointed rendezvous at the Long Island of the Holston. To the south, Rutherford and Williamson were ready to launch a drive into the Middle and Valley settlements.

On September 1, 1776, General Rutherford led his 2,500 North Carolinians through the Swannanoa Gap in the Blue Ridge toward the Middle settlements some eighty miles distant. Reaching those towns on September 14, Rutherford was somewhat disappointed not to find Williamson and the South Carolinians there.³¹ Nevertheless, he set his men to work destroying nearby villages and food caches. In the meantime the 1,800 South Carolinians under Colonel Williamson were pushing northwest toward a juncture with Rutherford's army. Coming up behind Rutherford, Williamson and his men fell into a trap intended for the North Carolinians at a mountain cove known as the Black Hole. After a two-hour exchange the Cherokee withdrew, leaving the South Carolina forces free to regroup, rest, and then push on to join the North Carolina troops at the Hiwassie River on September 23. For two weeks the combined armies scorched the Middle settlements, leaving no habitations or food. Then, early in October, the two commanders took their armies homeward.³²

As the Carolinians left the Cherokee country, the Virginians under Colonel William Christian were about to enter it. On October 1, 1776, Christian led his men across the Holston River toward the Overhill Towns. Pausing for several days to gather additional troops, the Virginia commander then ordered his

³¹ Journal of the North Carolina Council, Aug. 23, 1776, *NCCR*, X, 703; Rutherford to the North Carolina Council, Sept. 1, 1776, *ibid.*, 788-89; North Carolina Council to the North Carolina Delegates in Congress, Sept. 9, 1776, *ibid.*, XI, 349; same to Patrick Henry, Oct. 25, 1776, *ibid.*, X, 860-61; William Lenoir, "Journal of the Cherokee Expedition, 1776," *Journal of Southern History* 6 (1940), 247-59.

³² Clinton Journal, Draper Colls., Thomas Sumter Papers (Duke), III, 164-75; Cameron to Stuart, Sept. 23, 1776, CO5/78, 45.

army forward. Their path to the French Broad was chosen so well by the trader Isaac Thomas that they arrived there on October 13, two days earlier than Christian had anticipated. Colonel Christian had expected to find the Cherokee prepared for battle, but a probing thrust across the river revealed that the braves had fled.³³

From the French Broad the expedition pushed on to the Tennessee, descending that stream to a point near Dragging Canoe's old village, the Island Town.³⁴ Encamping nearby, Colonel Christian sent word to the Raven, who had already asked for peace, and the other chiefs that they must comply with his terms. If they did so, only those villages that had supported Alexander Cameron and Dragging Canoe would be destroyed; if they did not, all the villages would be leveled.

By now the majority of the Cherokee were ready to negotiate. At the approach of the Virginians, the tribesmen had fled into the mountains, leaving behind in their villages "horses, cattle, dogs, hogs, and fowls," as well as "between forty and fifty thousand bushels of corn and ten or fifteen thousand bushels of Potatoes."³⁵ There was no longer a British agent in the towns to encourage them; Alexander Cameron had fled to the Creek country. Only Dragging Canoe and his most loyal followers remained intransigent; soon they would move down the Tennessee River to build new towns in the vicinity of present-day

³³ William Preston to the Virginia Council, Aug. 9, 1776, Draper Colls., William Preston Papers (Duke), IV, 68; James Thompson to William Preston, Oct. 6, 1776, *ibid.*, 74; "General Return of Troops under Christian at Six Mile Camp," *ibid.*, Virginia Papers (UNC), VIII, 72; Christian to Henry, Oct. 6, 1776, *VMHB* 17 (1909), 52; same to same, Oct. 14, 1776, *NCCR*, X, 84; *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), Nov. 1, 1776, 3.

³⁴ Captain Joseph Martin's Orderly Book of the Cherokee Expedition, Draper Colls., Virginia Papers (UNC), VIII, 72-73; Christian to Henry, Oct. 27, 1776, *VMHB* 17 (1909), 61-64; same to William Preston, June 8, 1776, Draper Colls., Preston Papers (Duke), IV, 49; Cameron to Stuart, July 9, 1776, CO5/77, 167; Col. Joseph Williams to the President of the North Carolina Congress, Nov. 6, 1776, *NCCR*, X, 892; Journal of the North Carolina Congress, Dec. 3, 1776, *ibid.*, 951; *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), Nov. 29, 1776, 2.

³⁵ William Christian to Patrick Henry, Oct. 27, 1776, *VMHB* 17 (1909), 51-54; Cameron to Stuart, Aug. 31, 1776, CO5/78, 72-73.

Chattanooga, Tennessee.³⁶ Consequently the majority of the Cherokee capitulated, agreeing to give a number of hostages, to attempt to capture and deliver Stuart, Cameron, and other Loyalists, and to cede a portion of their lands to pay the expenses of the war. Further, they agreed to relinquish all persons and property seized by them. According to the agreement between Colonel Christian and the chiefs, the terms of the truce would be considered and a formal treaty drawn up in the spring when a full tribal delegation could meet commissioners from Virginia. For his part Christian attempted to insure the truce by forbidding anyone to go into the Overhill settlements without proper authorization. By the second week in November, Christian and his troops had started homeward.³⁷

The collapse of Cherokee resistance was disappointing, though perhaps not unexpected, to the British Indian officials belatedly trying to secure support for them. John Stuart had hoped that they could hold out until he could convince the Creeks to join the battle. The task of persuading that tribe was proving difficult. They were sulky because of the attention and supplies given the Cherokee in the spring, hesitant because peace with the Choctaw was not final, and divided in their opinion because of the small but vocal following which George Galphin had managed to attract.³⁸

As a consequence Superintendent Stuart had stepped up his efforts to settle the Choctaw-Creek dispute. In October and November of 1776 he conferred with representatives of both the Upper and Lower Creek towns and the Choctaw nation. At the Creek parleys he tried to bring up the matter of assistance for the Cherokee. To his dismay, he found that "all the Southern Tribes are greatly dispirited, by the unopposed successes of the

³⁶ Arthur Campbell to William Davis, Aug. 26, 1782, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 271-72; William Thompson to Cameron, Nov. 14, 1776, CO5/94, 157.

³⁷ *Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia, 1776* (Richmond, 1828), I, 11; *ibid.*, 1776, I, 27; William Christian to William Russell, Nov. 12, 1776, Miscellaneous Papers, Series I, Raleigh.

³⁸ John Stuart to Germain, Aug. 23, 1776, CO5/77, 128; Galphin to Willie Jones, Oct. 26, 1776, PCC, no. 78, XIII, 17-20.

Rebells, and no appearance of any Support from Government to His Majesty's distressed subjects in the interior parts of the Provinces, or to the Indians who have engaged in His Majesty's cause."³⁹ Excuses were about all the Creeks were willing to offer. Emistisiguo, the chief spokesman for the Upper Creeks, could promise nothing until after the winter's hunt was completed. Then he would send his warriors into battle, but only if supplied by the British and aided by troops. The only satisfactory promise Stuart could obtain was that the Lower Creeks would aid in defending East Florida against a threatened invasion from Georgia. The Cherokee would have to stand or fall alone.

Although Superintendent Stuart had devoted most of his attention during 1776 to the Cherokee War and related affairs, he could not neglect other departmental matters. In the Mississippi District during the summer he was faced with the death of his deputy there, the necessity for an immediate replacement, and the need to use the tribesmen of that district in some constructive way. Believing Henry Stuart qualified to fill the vacant post, the superintendent nominated him for the position.⁴⁰ If this appointment could be approved with dispatch, then the Choctaw and Chickasaw could have direction in their patrols along the Mississippi and Tennessee rivers.

That John Stuart's fears of American activity on the Mississippi were not unfounded was confirmed by information from the Choctaw agent, Charles Stuart, that the governor of New Orleans was winking at the activities of Americans there. The Patriot agent Oliver Pollock had managed to purchase ammunition, load it on batteaux, and get it back upriver before the British learned of it.⁴¹

³⁹ John Stuart to Germain, Aug. 23, 1776, CO5/77, 128; Germain to Stuart, Sept. 8, 1776, CO5/77, 101; Stuart to Germain, Nov. 24, 1776, CO5/78, 72; same to same, Oct. 26, 1776, CO5/78, 15-19; Talk of Emistisiguo to Stuart, Nov. 19, 1776, *ibid.*, 81; Samuel Thomas to Stuart, Sept. 19, 1776, *ibid.*, 30-31; Taitt to Stuart, Feb. 19, 1777, *ibid.*, 107.

⁴⁰ Stuart to Germain, Sept. 16, 1776, CO5/79, 130.

⁴¹ Alden, *John Stuart*, 212; Charles Stuart to John Stuart, Oct. 23, 1776,

If the British could not afford to concentrate all their energies in the Cherokee conflict, the Americans certainly could not. Georgia, for example, was particularly interested in overall Indian diplomacy since "to the west and almost down upon the Georgia line are the most numerous tribes of Indians now in North America, viz: the Creeks, Cherokee, Choctaws, and a number of small tribes in the whole at least 15,000 gunmen."⁴² On Georgia's southern boundary the Indians joined the East Florida Loyalists in raiding farms and outposts. Accordingly, the state officials wanted six battalions of Continentals stationed within their boundaries. Thereby the state would be defended, communications between the Indian officials in the Floridas and the Southern Indians could be disrupted, and the troops would provide the nucleus of a force which could either invade East Florida or attack the Indians.⁴³

Unfortunately for the Georgians, no troops were available. An apologetic General Charles Lee assured them that there was no need for worry; the surest defense for them was the punitive expedition sent against the Cherokee. Lee's assurances gave little comfort to the people of Georgia. They were the more disturbed because they had no goods with which to buy peace. Supplies were so scarce that at one point late in 1776 the Georgia Patriots had at their disposal the grand total of fifty pounds

CO5/78, 57; Deposition of Two Anonymous Frenchmen before Charles Stuart, Oct. 23, 1776, *ibid.*, 59; John Stuart to Germain, Oct. 26, 1776, CO5/78, 55.

⁴² Jonathan Bryan, John Houstoun, and Lachlan McIntosh to Gen. Charles Lee, July 5, 1776, PCC, no. 73, 157-60; *RRG*, I, 150-54; Journal of the Council of Safety of Georgia, July 2, 1776, *ibid.*, I, 148; Lachlan McIntosh to Charles Lee, July 7, 1776, "Papers of General Lachlan McIntosh, 1774-1779," *CGHS*, XII, 51; same to same, July 29, 1776, *ibid.*, 10-11; same to Gen. Robert Howe, Oct. 29, 1776, *ibid.*, 9; same to same, Dec. 30, 1776, *ibid.*, 29.

⁴³ Bryan, Houstoun, and McIntosh to Lee, July 5, 1776, PCC, no. 73, 157-60; Journal of the Georgia Council, Aug. 19, 1776, *RRG*, I, 181; McIntosh to Lee, July 29, 1776, *CGHS*, XII, 10-11; Lee to Richard Peters, Aug. 2, 1776, Charles Lee, "Papers," V, 189; same to John Rutledge, Aug. 1, 1776, *ibid.*, 186-87.

of lead and twelve handkerchiefs (which had been donated by Governor Wright!).⁴⁴

The only effective weapon in the hands of the Georgians by late 1776 was the fate of the Cherokee. George Galphin had spread the word that in the Cherokee country "their Towns is [*sic*] all burned Their Corn cut down and Themselves drove [*sic*] into the Woods to perish and a great many of them killed."⁴⁵ Galphin's ability to use this tale in conjunction with "rum and good words" helped him to offset the actions of the frontiersmen who killed Creek braves and threatened to kill others on sight. In spite of the odds against him, Galphin was able to maintain so strong a party in the Lower Creek towns that his partisans there effectively countered an Upper Creek proposal for raiding the Georgia frontier by threatening counter-raids against Pensacola.⁴⁶

However one views Indian affairs in the South in 1776, the conflict with the Cherokee dominates. The results of the war were to break the power of a major Southern tribe, rendering that tribe temporarily impotent as auxiliaries to any British force and reluctant to act once they recovered (if they ever did), to discourage other tribes in the region from similar behavior either on their own or in conjunction with British forces, to discredit the British Indian officials in the eyes of both their charges and their superiors, and to hearten the Patriots trying to defend their cause on several fronts. Both local and national Patriot leaders would find that the commitment of more than 4,500 men and the expenditure of several million dollars in the effort against the Cherokee were of lasting importance. Later British campaigns in the South could be opposed more effectively because the Southern tribes had been cowed by the expeditions against the Cherokee, leaving the Southern tribesmen

⁴⁴ RRG, I, 161; Lee to John Rutledge, July 23, 1776, Charles Lee, "Papers," V, 159; same to Archibald Bullock, July 18, 1776, *ibid.*, 144.

⁴⁵ Galphin to the Creeks, n.d. [1776], CO5/78, 41; same to [James] Burgess, Aug. 28, 1776, *ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁶ Galphin to Willie Jones, Oct. 26, 1776, PCC, no. 78, XIII, 17-20; Jones to John Walker, Nov. 12, 1776, *ibid.*

hesitant to act. Labor as John Stuart might in 1777 and afterward, he could never overcome the mental images of smoking villages and frightened refugees held by the other Southern Indians. The Patriots on the other hand usually could manage to conjure up such images to good effect.

III. A YEAR OF PEACE



As the Virginians withdrew from the Cherokee country in late 1776, they left behind a despondent tribe eager for an official end to the war. So pinched were the Cherokee by their plight, the Raven, the chief who had sought truce with Christian, traveled to the fort near the Long Island of the Holston seeking an acceleration of the negotiations. Colonel Christian himself was concerned enough with the condition of the tribe to leave his home at Dunkard's Bottom, journey one hundred and thirty miles to Fort Patrick Henry, and explain that only the governor and the council could do anything about hastening the negotiations. Christian assured the Cherokee leader that provisions would be forthcoming once the treaty had been made.¹

When William Christian returned home he immediately wrote to the governor of Virginia, Patrick Henry (who was his brother-in-law), to describe the "distressed situation" of the Cherokee, their desire for a formal treaty, and their reluctance to negotiate in Williamsburg. The governor responded quickly to Christian's message. He believed that the sooner a treaty was

¹ Deposition of Robert Dews, Jan. 21, 1777, *NCCR*, III, 995-1005; Dews to Joseph Martin, Feb. 22, 1777, Draper Colls., King's Mountain Papers (UNC), XVI, 7; Talk of the Dragging Canoe to Alexander Cameron in William Thompson to Cameron, Nov. 14, 1776, CO5/94, 157; Talk of William Christian to the Raven, Jan. 19, 1777, CO5/78, 147.

formulated, the sooner peace could return to the troubled frontier. Accordingly, he commissioned Colonels William Christian, William Preston, and Evan Shelby to meet the Cherokee representatives at the Long Island of the Holston and draw up a preliminary treaty. In his instructions the governor assured the tribesmen that all leaders of the tribe were welcome; even the choleric Dragging Canoe might come in under the conditions of amnesty. If this conference was successful, any agreement reached could be incorporated into a comprehensive treaty at a general meeting late in the year.²

The Virginia peace efforts were furthered by the arrival of Colonel Nathaniel Gist on the Virginia frontier in March of 1777. In the state under commission from General Washington, Gist was to recruit among the Cherokee. Washington had sent the son of his old friend Christopher Gist southward to enlist four companies of rangers and several hundred Cherokees to serve as scouts. The commander-in-chief shrewdly observed that in effect such auxiliaries would be hostages against the good behavior of the tribe. In response to appeals from the Virginia officials, Nathaniel Gist agreed to help bring a settlement. After all, he could make no progress with his own mission until this was done. His years as a trader, his marriage alliance within the tribe, and his overall standing with the Cherokee guaranteed him their attention. When he warned them that the troops

² Richard Caswell to Thomas Burke, Feb. 16, 1777, Thomas Burke Papers, 1773-1779, Univ. of North Carolina, Southern Historical Collections, Chapel Hill; William Russell to William Fleming, Feb. 28, 1777, Draper Colls., Frontier Wars (Duke), I, 49; Griffith Rutherford to Caswell, Feb. 1, 1777, *NCCR*, XII, 754-55; James Thompson to Joseph Martin, March 1, 1777, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 15; Anthony Bledsoe to Martin, Feb. 22, 1777, *ibid.*, 26-26; same to same, April 8, 1777, *ibid.*, 21; Patrick Henry to Christian, Jan. 24, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, I, 94-95; *JCSV*, I, 418-21; Henry to Oconostotah, March 3, 1777, CO5/78, 160; same to Caswell, March 14, 1777, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, I, 124; Robert Dews to Joseph Martin, Feb. 22, 1777, Draper Colls., King's Mountain Papers (UNC), XVI, 7; Report of a Committee headed by Willie Jones to investigate the frontier situation, Revolutionary Papers, Univ. of North Carolina, Southern Historical Collections, Chapel Hill; Thomas P. Abernethy, *From Frontier to Plantation in Tennessee* (Memphis, 1955), 10-11.

would return if peace was not kept, they listened; when he passed on the invitation to meet the Virginia commissioners at the Long Island of the Holston by April 15, most were willing to attend or be represented.³

While Nathaniel Gist and the Virginia leaders worked to prepare the parley, Alexander Cameron spread the tale that the meeting was a ruse. Those who went were to be imprisoned, warned Cameron. It was not surprising then that only about one hundred Cherokee reached the rendezvous by April 19.⁴ When the commissioners discovered the reason for this, they agreed to hold discussions to a minimum, permitting the delegates to return and prove Cameron a liar.

The Virginians opened with demands for peace, restitution for damages, and rejection of all British overtures. But the Old Tassel quickly brushed aside these matters and came to the point: "Brothers. We are now talking together. The Man above has put it into our hearts to do so this day. But Brothers, do you remember that *the difference is about our land.*"⁵ Despite the old chief's honesty, the commissioners continued to avoid the issue. Their next ploy was to bring up the matter of prisoners

³ Cameron to Stuart, July 9, 1776, CO5/77; *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), Dec. 27, 1776, 4; Samuel C. Williams, "Nathaniel Gist, Father of Sequoyah," in *ETHS Publications* 5 (Jan. 1933), 39-54; Archibald Cary to William Preston, July 31, 1776, Draper Colls., Preston Papers (Duke), IV, 62; Washington to Gist, Jan. 14, 1777, Washington, *Writings*, ed. Sparks, VII, 11-12; *Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia, 1777*, II, 57, 124; Henry to Washington, Sept. 5, 1777, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, I, 184; Henry to the Great Warrior, Nov. 15, 1777, PCC, no. 71, II, 209; same to Governor Johnson of Maryland, Aug. 30, 1777, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, I, 181; Hugh G. Cleland, *George Washington in the Ohio Valley* (Pittsburgh, 1955), 15; Washington to Gist, Jan. 14, 1777, Washington, *Writings*, ed. Sparks, VII, 11-12; Gist to the Cherokee, March 28, 1777, Draper Colls., Preston Papers (Duke), IV, 120-22; Talk of the Virginia Commissioners to the Cherokee, March 29, 1777, *ibid.*, IV, 111-15; Anthony Bledsoe to Joseph Martin, n.d. [1777], Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), IV, 122-49.

⁴ Proceedings of the Virginia Commissioners with the Cherokee, April 1777, Draper Colls., Preston Papers (Duke), IV, 122-49. The discussion of the negotiations comes from this source.

⁵ *Ibid.* Note: Italics supplied by the author.

and property to be returned. Equal to the exchange, the Cherokee countered by asking whether they would be paid for goods returned, observing that "for a good Horse a gun would do well."⁶ The Virginians rejected this idea altogether. Finally coming to the question of land, the commissioners promised that no new settlements would be made below Powell's Valley or along the Holston River and that after a final treaty was ratified, only messengers or public officials would enter the Cherokee lands.

At the close of the meeting the Cherokee were invited to go to Williamsburg. The Great Warrior and thirty other curiosity-seekers accepted, journeyed to the capital, conferred with the governor, performed a tribal dance on the palace green for their hosts, and returned home under escort. Protection seemed necessary when the governor received reports that some speculators wished to break off negotiations in order to reopen hostilities and take all the Cherokee lands.⁷

While Virginia negotiated with the Overhill Towns, South Carolina conferred with the Middle, Valley, and Lower settlements. Those tribesmen were as eager to come to terms as their brethren over the mountains. Indicative of this was the delegation from these towns that journeyed to Charleston early in 1777 to make apologies before the state council and promise peace in the future.⁸ In meetings with Colonel Andrew Williamson on the frontier, representatives of these towns promised peace and prompt attendance at the formal parleys scheduled for DeWitt's Corner on May 7, 1777.

Once the South Carolina Council set the date for a meeting with the Cherokee, delegates were invited from Georgia, North

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Evan Shelby to Joseph Martin, April 24, 1777, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 27; *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), May 16, 1777, 2; *JCSV*, I, 416, 421-22; *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), May 30, 1777, 2.

⁸ Ramsay, *Revolution of South Carolina*, 159, 346-50; *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, Nov. 21, 1776, 3; *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), Jan. 10, 1777, 2-3; Drayton, *Memoirs*, II, 36-62.

Carolina, and Virginia. Since neither North Carolina nor Virginia could prepare for the conference in the time remaining, each urged South Carolina to act in the general interest.⁹

At the appointed time some six hundred tribesmen gathered, an official delegation of eight, the rest hopeful of gifts. South Carolina was represented by Andrew Williamson, LeRoy Hammond, William H. Drayton, and Daniel Horry; the Georgians present were Jonathan Bryan, Jonathan Cochran, and William Glascock. Within two weeks a treaty had been drawn in which the signatories pledged "universal peace and friendship." In the agreement the Cherokee ceded all land east of the Unicoi Mountains, promised to release all captives and property, and declared their intention to deliver up any Loyalists who had participated in the war. The states agreed to supply and control the trade and to maintain order along the boundary.¹⁰ Of course the tribe lost the lands but few of the other promises were kept by either side.

Two months after these discussions at DeWitt's Corner were concluded, the parleys at the Long Island of the Holston began. By the middle of July the tribesmen visiting Williamsburg had returned, the delegates from the other villages had arrived, and the commissioners had reached the rendezvous. Patriot representatives present were Waightstill Avery, William Sharpe, Robert Lanier, and Joseph Winston for North Carolina, Christian, Preston, and Shelby for Virginia. After four days of hard bargaining the Cherokee agreed, as had their brethren at DeWitt's Corner, to cede land, return prisoners and property,

⁹ John Rutledge to Richard Caswell, March 10, 1777, *NCCR*, XI, 417; John Page to Caswell, April 17, 1777, *ibid.*, 415.

¹⁰ Rutledge to Caswell, *ibid.*; "Order of Council Appointing Commissioners on the Cherokee Treaty," *CGHS*, XII, 63-64; Treaty of DeWitt's Corner, John Steele Papers, 1777-79, Univ. of North Carolina, Southern Historical Collections, Chapel Hill; Treaty of DeWitt's Corner [1824 copy], Treasurer's and Comptroller's Papers, Indian Affairs and Lands, 1739-91, Raleigh; *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, June 26, 1777, 3; Archibald Henderson, "The Treaty of Long Island of Holston," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 8 (1931), 55-116.

and keep the peace. In accepting these terms the Patriots promised to maintain order on the frontier.

That the boundary might be specifically demarcated, a treaty was drawn for each state, each including the general provisions outlined above, then detailing the respective boundaries. In both cases an attempt was made to bring the transmontane settlers within the bounds of a state, the Watauga-Nolichucky folk into North Carolina, the Holston folk into Virginia. That transgressors of the boundaries or the general peace might be reported, Joseph Martin was appointed as Virginia's resident agent in the Overhill Towns. So pleasing was this to the Cherokee that they persuaded the North Carolinians to appoint James Robertson acting agent until the Council of the state could consider the matter.¹¹

Although the principal concern was with Cherokee affairs early in 1777, the Creeks could not be ignored by the Americans. Although that entire tribe was not yet at war, some bands were openly hostile and the Patriots feared the whole nation might be led into conflict. The Georgians were particularly worried, since their state militia units were not up to complement. The protectors of the state, four hundred Continentals and a few state troops, were outnumbered by the Creek warriors.

When the conditions in Georgia were laid before the Continental Congress early in 1777, that body instructed George Galphin to discuss a treaty with the Creeks. If the tribal leaders would be impressed by a visit to Philadelphia and the Congress, Galphin could bring a few on such a journey. Setting aside his plans to attend the DeWitt's Corner meeting as a South Carolina commissioner, Galphin began laying the groundwork for

¹¹ Manuscript commission in the Richard Caswell Papers, Univ. of North Carolina, Southern Historical Collections, Chapel Hill; Treaty of Long Island of Holston, Governor's Offices, Minutes of Council, 1777-1780, Raleigh; Henderson, "Treaty," 55-116; Caswell to John Rutledge, June 11, 1777, *NCCR*, XI, 496; Meeting of the North Carolina Council, June 11, 1777, *ibid.*, XXII, 917-18; Isaac Shelby to Joseph Martin, June 20, 1777, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 23; *JCSV*, II, 21.

a conference with the Creeks. Since the frontier folk were worried about the purpose of the meeting, Galphin was aided by a proclamation from the Georgia governor designed to "quiet the minds of the people of the frontier about the meeting with the Creeks."¹²

Despite the obstacles before him, George Galphin was able to meet a number of representatives from the Lower Creek towns on June 17, 1777, at his plantation on the Ogeechee River. Assisted by Robert Rae and four other Georgians, Galphin warned the Creeks of the consequences of belligerent action on their part. War might bring upon them punishment more severe than that suffered a year before by the Cherokee. Indeed, the commissioners warned, the frontiersmen were eager for an excuse to attack the Creeks and seize their lands. The headmen confessed that they wanted peace but that they had been misguided by David Taitt.

The Patriots tried clearing the path of peace by promising to reopen the trade if they received pledges of good behavior from the tribesmen.¹³ Here the Americans struck home, for as one Indian admitted, "we have been used so long to wrap our Children up as soon as they are born in Goods procured of the white People that we cannot do without [them]"¹⁴ Trade and peace were inseparable, confessed a chief, as he asked the Patriots to "accept this Eagle's Tail, it was given me for making Peace, I now give it with the same intention, I hope to convince our Enemies we have not made ourselves poor, if you will send some pack horses loaded with Goods if but five into our Towns."¹⁵ At the close of the conference the chieftains declined Galphin's invitation to visit faraway Philadelphia. Instead, a delegation visited Charleston and Savannah. They returned

¹² *RRG*, I, 311-12.

¹³ Manuscript Journal of Galphin's Meeting with the Creeks, Treasurer's and Comptroller's Papers, Indian Affairs and Lands, 1739-1791, Raleigh; William McIntosh to Cameron, July 6, 1777, CO5/78, 193.

¹⁴ Manuscript Journal of Galphin's Meeting, Raleigh.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

across Georgia under escort since many Patriots made no distinction between neutral and belligerent natives.¹⁶

While the Americans spent the first half of 1777 seeking peace with the Southern Indians, the British sought their involvement in the war. Late in 1776, Lord George Germain had decided upon a plan to pressure the Patriots along the frontier from Pennsylvania to Georgia. A threat from the west might reduce the number of effectives that could oppose Howe's advance toward Philadelphia. Accordingly, Germain instructed Stuart to send his charges against the settlements; the natives might be aided by companies of refugees organized to accompany them. At Detroit Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton was instructed to send the Shawnee against Pennsylvania and northwestern Virginia. Once Philadelphia was secured, Howe could take his army southward where the warriors might aid in reducing South Carolina and Georgia.¹⁷

By the time that John Stuart received the colonial secretary's orders in early 1777, he was deeply troubled.¹⁸ Depressed by his

¹⁶ *Gazette of the State of South Carolina*, July 14, 1777, 3; Minutes of the Georgia Executive Council, July 21, 1777, in "The Proceedings and Minutes of the Governor and Council of Georgia, October 4, 1774, through November 7, 1775, and September 6, 1779, through September 20, 1780," ed. Lilla M. Hawes, *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 34 (1950), 208-26, 288-312; 35 (1951), 31-59, 126-51, 196-221; Meeting of the Georgia Executive Council, Aug. 12, 1777, *ibid.*, XXV, 110; Stuart to Germain, Oct. 6, 1777, CO5/79, 29; Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton, Oct. 14, 1777, Burnett, *Letters*, II, 521; Laurens to John Rutledge, Dec. 1, 1777, *ibid.*, 578-80; James Duane to Philip Schuyler, Dec. 16, 1777, *ibid.*, 590-91; Laurens to Duane, Dec. 24, 1777, *ibid.*, 597; Congress to Edward Hand, Oct. 24, 1777, *ibid.*, II, 532; *JCC*, IX, 997.

¹⁷ Germain to [Guy Carleton], March 26, 1777, "Haldimand Papers," *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, IX (1886), 347; Germain to Stuart, Oct. 11, 1777, CO5/78, 175; same to same, April 2, 1777, *ibid.*, 63; William Howe to Stuart, CO5/84, 223; Germain to Carleton, March 26, 1777, Germain Papers, V, WLCL; Howe to General Augustin Prevost, Jan. 15, 1777, HMC, *Amer. Mss.* (London, 1904), I, 84; Howe to Peter Chester, Jan. 20, 1777, *ibid.*; same to Lt. Col. Alexander Dickson, May 6, 1777, *ibid.*, 108.

¹⁸ Alden, *John Stuart*, 146, 159, 176; Stuart to Germain, Feb. 23, 1777,

failures during the Cherokee War, he was worried by his health and the demands of his job. In particular was he concerned about rising departmental expenditures. Uncertain communication with the headquarters of the command-in-chief forced the drawing of bills directly on the treasury. During the first two years of the war he had spent more than £25,000, an increase of 20 to 30 per cent compared to a similar period before the war. In light of the almost total lack of Indian action in support of the king, these expenses seemed all the greater.

Yet none of these matters was so immediately upsetting as his disagreement with Governor Patrick Tonyn of East Florida, with whom he had to work. Not a man to conceal his prejudices, Tonyn regarded Stuart as vain, suspicious, jealous, and above all, indolent. Because the superintendent would not respond to the governor's every whim, Patrick Tonyn thought Stuart stood "in need of a strong spur."¹⁹ The major basis for contention between the two in early 1777 concerned the possibility that East Florida might be invaded by the Georgians. Since the excitable Tonyn lived in anticipation of invasion, he wanted the Creek warriors at his beck and call. Never did the governor comprehend that tribesmen living five hundred miles away could not remain in a constant state of readiness.²⁰ Only the Seminole Creeks, who lived close to St. Augustine, could be called upon frequently.

Once John Stuart gave vent to his emotions and complained to Germain in a long letter of February 1777, the superinten-

CO5/78, 76; same to same, Jan. 23, 1778, CO5/79, 67; Germain to Stuart, Sept. 5, 1776, CO5/77, 101; Gage Papers, Uncatalogued Warrants—Stuart, WLCL.

¹⁹ Tonyn to Clinton, June 8, 1776, CO5/556, 683–88; same to same, May 21, 1776, Clinton Papers, WLCL; same to Germain, May 5, 1777, CO5/557, 407.

²⁰ Tonyn to Taitt, April 20, 1777, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, I, 105; same to Perryman and the Creeks, Jan. 31, 1777, CO5/557, 333; same to same, April 2, 1777, *ibid.*, 321–22; Table of Distance of Indian Towns from St. Augustine and Pensacola [1777], CO5/78, 217; Tonyn to Germain, Dec. 26, 1777, CO5/558, 19–22.

dent went to work.²¹ First he had to secure warriors from each major tribe. Promises in plenty he had from the Creeks and even a few from the double-dealing Cherokee. The Choctaw and Chickasaw were another matter. Since a parley with them seemed the only feasible way to secure promises of gunmen, the superintendent sent Charles Stuart, his Choctaw deputy, on a tour through the Mississippi country inviting delegations to meet at Mobile in April. While his deputy traversed the Mississippi District, John Stuart sought to mobilize the Creeks. Happily for Stuart he was able to get trade goods into the Creek towns during February and March of 1777. He hoped that these would counter the "rum and good words" of George Galphin.²²

Reports sent back by Charles Stuart were filled with bad tidings. The rum traffic was causing problems in the extreme. In the Choctaw towns he saw "nothing but Rum Drinking and Women crying over the Dead bodies of their relations who have died by Rum."²³ The warriors were constantly drunk while in the villages. Warned Stuart: "unless some Step is taken to put a Stop to this abuse we need not look for any assistance from this nation, for at the very time they may be wanted they may be all drunk and Rum flows into their land from all quarters and is in my Opinion the only source of all abuses and complaints."²⁴ One chief estimated that more than a thousand people had died from excessive drinking in a period of about eighteen months. Even the Choctaw, still sober, would promise nothing until they learned the intentions of the Chickasaw. To Charles Stuart this augured no good, for he thought the Chickasaw a "spoiled Nation, Proud and Insolent."

Leaving the Mississippi country, Charles Stuart journeyed south to prepare for the coming conference at Mobile. Dismayed to find that the expected supply ship was delayed, he postponed

²¹ Stuart to Germain, Feb. 23, 1777, CO5/78, 76.

²² Stuart to William Knox, March 10, 1777, *ibid.*, 116; same to Germain, March 10, 1777, *ibid.*, 105.

²³ Charles Stuart to John Stuart, March 4, 1777, CO5/78, 126; Farquhar Bethune to Charles Stuart, Feb. 25, 1777, *ibid.*, 130.

²⁴ Charles Stuart to John Stuart, April 8, 1777, *ibid.*, 128.

the meeting until April 15. When Superintendent John Stuart arrived, the two conferred and agreed to buy what they needed in Mobile. Because the delegates were dilatory, the meeting did not begin until May 1, 1777.

The superintendent welcomed some 2,800 tribesmen, the majority of them Choctaw. The Chickasaw spokesman explained that most of his people remained behind guarding the Tennessee River against Patriot expeditions. He assured John Stuart that the Chickasaw were undying in their loyalty. This profession was followed by a similar one from a Choctaw chief. Once they pledged their faith the tribal spokesmen then entered their complaints. Of first instance was the rum traffic, of second the machinations of Patriot traders. The sympathetic superintendent promised to do what he could about both problems. Before closing the business he requested a land cession necessary for completing the survey of the West Florida boundary. The tribes promised peace, assistance, and the required land, and Superintendent Stuart distributed presents including guns, three thousand jew's harps, and six hundred "Common painted framed Looking Glasses."²⁵

After the meeting was concluded, John Stuart returned to Pensacola. He could now tally promises of action from all the Southern tribes. But would they be kept? Even as he pondered in Pensacola, his deputies were uncovering indecision. The Creeks, for example, once had requested the assistance of troops, but now David Taitt found them "jealous of Soldiers or any Body of White Men coming in Among them." Also, they stalled; they would do nothing until after their annual festival

²⁵ John Stuart to Germain, March 10, 1777, *ibid.*, 105; Warriors of the Southern Indians, n.d., Germain Papers, XVII, 11, WLCL; Taitt to John Stuart, June 5, 1777, CO5/78, 157; Superintendent's request for goods for Choctaw conference, CO5/80, 10-12; Terms of the Choctaw Cession, May 26, 1777, CO5/78, 151. Later the line was altered; see Terms of Choctaw Cession, Jan. 9, 1779, CO5/81, 20. In connection with Stuart's attempts to deal with the rum problem, see Howe to Stuart, July 12, 1777, CO5/94, 401; same to Lt. Col. William Stiell, July 13, 1777, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, I, 124; Meeting of Chester, Stiell, and Stuart, April 10, 1777, CO5/84, 273.

of the Green Corn.²⁶ Then they would raid only western Georgia and South Carolina; they refused to assist in East Florida.

As if the problems within his department were not enough, the superintendent faced other difficulties. Cooperation with General Howe was expected of him, but he needed instructions from that officer. Since May there had been no word. Stuart was troubled, for the "Indians cannot be long kept in order without some Effort be made to the Southward this Fall; for the Rebels tell them what best suits their own purposes without the least regard to truth."²⁷ The same principle applied to the Loyalists enlisted according to Howe's instructions. Stuart could not answer their restlessness with a call to action. Raids would bring Patriot expeditions into the Indian country.²⁸ These would be disastrous for Stuart's plans.

In late summer the superintendent's worst fears were realized. His plans were wrecked. Those Lower Creek delegates who had met with George Galphin in June had brought home stomachful of rum and a distaste for the British. In the weeks that followed they laid plans to expel the British traders from both the Upper and Lower Creek towns, plotting also the assassination of David Taitt and Alexander Cameron. The two deputies were saved only because Alexander McGillivray, assistant commissary for the Upper Creek towns, uncovered the plot and warned them. Even so, they, along with the traders, fled to

²⁶ Taitt to John Stuart, June 5, 1777, CO5/78, 157. The Green Corn festival was most important, as Stuart explained to Germain, "No Indian being willing to go out on any expedition untill that Feast was over; being precluded, by their Religion, the use of Corn, or Pulse of any kind, before the offering of the first fruits." See Stuart to Germain, Aug. 10, 1776, CO5/79, 184.

²⁷ Stuart to William Knox, Aug. 26, 1777, CO5/78, 220.

²⁸ Stuart to Howe, Feb. 1778, Headquarters Papers of the British Army in North America (microfilm from the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va.), VIII, no. 912. Concerning the light horse raised by Cameron and Richard Pearis, see returns for both troops for Jan. 1 to Jan. 31, 1778, *ibid.*, nos. 906-907. Refugee Cherokee passing through the Creek country increased fear of retaliation by the Patriots. See Taitt to Tonym, May 23, 1777, CO5/593, 391-95; same to same, May 29, 1777, CO5/557, 599-604; Stuart to Germain, Feb. 23, 1777, CO5/78, 76.

Pensacola. The dismayed superintendent would not permit the trade to continue until the Creeks apologized and promised good conduct.²⁹

Credit for this minor Patriot coup must be given George Galphin. That beleaguered official was laboring on two fronts: on the one hand he sought to neutralize the Indians and counter the British; on the other he had to keep the Indians from being attacked by the frontiersmen who coveted their lands. So real was the possibility of an expansionist war by the westerners that Galphin had to call on the Continental commander in the South, General Robert Howe, and on the Continental Congress, for assistance in reasoning with the Georgians. When Congress urged Georgia to "cultivate peace and harmony with the Indian nations," the state assembly failed to approve war. That the state could have no excuse for war, Galphin labored unceasingly, even managing a parley with some traditionally pro-British Upper Creeks in the fall of 1777.³⁰

But George Galphin was not the only Patriot Indian official facing difficulties in late 1777. On the Virginia frontier raids by obstinate Cherokee, threats by land-hungry frontiersmen, and Cherokee complaints about lagging boundary surveys created uneasiness.³¹ Governor Henry ordered the militia to mobilize

²⁹ Alexander McGillivray to John Stuart, Sept. 21, 1777, CO5/79, 33; Stuart to Germain, Oct. 6, 1777, *ibid.*, 29.

³⁰ Gen. Robert Howe to the Speaker and House of Assembly of Georgia, Sept. 4, 1777, PCC, no. 73, 7; JCC, IX, 823; *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, July 14, 1777, 3; Sir James Wright to Germain, Oct. 8, 1777, CGHS, III, 245; Elbert Order Book, Oct. 25, 1777, "Order Book of Samuel Elbert, Colonel and Brigadier General in the Continental Army, October, 1776, to November, 1778, and Letter Book of Governor Samuel Elbert, from January, 1785, to November, 1785," CGHS, V, pt. 2, 67-68; Samuel Elbert to Robert Howe, Oct. 17, 1777, *ibid.*, 63; Elbert Order Book, Nov. 7, 1777, *ibid.*, 70; James Wright to "My Lord [Germain]," Oct. 8, 1777, CRG Typescripts, XXXVIII, pt. 2, 127.

³¹ Patrick Henry to William Preston, Sept. 1, 1777, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, I, 183; Evan Shelby to ———, Aug. 22, 1777, Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers, I, LC; same to Arthur Campbell, Sept. 15, 1777, Draper Colls., King's Mountain Papers (UNC), IX, 15.

but was persuaded by his brother-in-law that force was not necessary. William Christian believed that decisive action on the boundary survey would be sufficient to quiet the Cherokee. A few militia to escort the survey party would be enough; other than that no troops would be needed.

To the south in North Carolina similar frontier problems existed. The North Carolina Council consequently instructed their Cherokee agent to bring a delegation to New Bern for talks. Accordingly, James Robertson left Watauga on a circuit of the Cherokee villages. En route he met Joseph Martin, the Virginia agent, departing in haste. Martin had been warned to leave the towns because of unrest. Robertson nevertheless continued on, found no outward hostility, and delivered his invitation. He did discover the reasons for the Cherokee agitation: messages poured in from Alexander Cameron castigating the Americans and expanding all British military victories; settlers daily crossed into Indian territory in disregard of the treaty; the militia were insulting, their commander was unconcerned; and unscrupulous traders cheated the tribesmen.³² The reaction of the North Carolina assembly to these difficulties was a reiteration of its proclamation against trespassing on Indian land and the dismissal of all militia units save a few companies of rangers in the counties of Burke, Tryon, and Washington.³³

In sum, the year 1777 was one of negotiation by all parties. American efforts at establishing peace were balanced against British talk of war. The troubled natives made promises to all suitors. Yet pledges of peace and future neutrality given the Americans would be broken if the British sweetened their demands with sufficient gifts. Given time to forget the sufferings

³² James Robertson to Col. Lanier and Maj. Winston, Oct. 16, 1777, Draper Colls., North Carolina Papers (UNC), I, 32-35; William Sharpe to Waightstill Avery, Nov. 3, 1777, Waightstill Avery Papers, 1777-94, Univ. of North Carolina, Southern Historical Collections, Chapel Hill; Waightstill Avery to James Robertson, Sept. 15, 1777, *NCCR*, XI, 763-64.

³³ Journals of the North Carolina Assembly, 1777, *NCCR*, XII, 159, 160, 170, 261, 417-18, 431.

of 1776-1777, the Cherokee and their neighbors increasingly considered action in support of the British. Patriot commissioners like George Galphin found no rest from their labors; only constant cultivation of the pro-American factions held any possibility of preventing future raids.

IV. EMPTY PROMISES



Through the winter of 1778 John Stuart mended the diplomatic fences shattered in the preceding fall.

That order might be restored more quickly in Creek affairs, he had cut off the trade until that nation promised good behavior. So important was the

trade that the Creeks soon sent delegations to Pensacola.

In December of 1777 and January of 1778 they came, begging forgiveness, promising loyalty, pressing for the restoration of the trade.¹ But the superintendent would make no adjustments until he was assured that the deputies and the traders would be safe.

Not until early spring did Stuart allow the return of the commissaries. Then the departmental officials were received with friendly overtures. Indeed, insisted the warriors, they would profess their faith publicly in Pensacola, if need be. Such journeys were quickly discouraged. The superintendent had expenses in plenty; he did not need more greedy visitors. Too, the British suspected that despite all the promises, the natives were still open to the highest bidder. Even though shortages might curtail Patriot activities temporarily, Stuart's men knew

¹ Peter Chester to Germain, Jan. 16, 1778, CO5/594, 263-64; Stuart to Howe, Feb. 4, 1778, Clinton Papers, WLCL.

too well that George Galphin and the Americans had a way with "rum and good words."²

But at that particular moment American competition was not John Stuart's major worry. Once again he was in dispute with Patrick Tonyn. The governor was suffering his annual climacteric over a possible invasion of his province from Georgia. Galling to the superintendent was Tonyn's insistence on sending requests for assistance directly to the tribe or the resident commissaries, rather than to Stuart. In the spring of 1778 Patrick Tonyn was demanding that the Creeks, one and all, rush to St. Augustine. Misinterpreting the rhetoric in the Indians' replies, the governor concluded that 1,600 warriors were marching to his assistance. Unaware of Tonyn's communications with the tribes, Superintendent Stuart had in the meantime continued his policy of holding the warriors in check. The mercurial governor was outraged. In a hot letter home he accused John Stuart of giving "peace talks" to the tribesmen and using other means of preventing the gunmen from aiding his province.³

But such was not the case. Neither unaware nor unconcerned about Tonyn's needs, Stuart could not give them primary consideration. His first concern was overall departmental policy.⁴ Could the Creeks be trusted? He sought the answer to that question at a conference with them in early May. Pressing for explanation of their behavior, the superintendent uncovered fear of Patriot reprisals. Again it was brought home to him that "the Rough Treatment which the Cherokees met with has had a bad effect upon the Southern nations and dread of sharing the Same fate has inclined them to wish for a neutrality."⁵

² Taitt to Stuart, April 7, 1778, CO5/79, 152; same to same, April 13, 1778, *ibid.*, 154; Patrick Carr to Galphin, June 10, 1778, Laurens Papers, Bundle 46, South Carolina Historical Society.

³ Tonyn to Germain, April 29, 1778, CO5/558, 279; same to same, July 3, 1778, *ibid.*, 376-77; same to same, Sept. 8, 1778, *ibid.*, 463.

⁴ Stuart to Tonyn, July 10, 1778, *ibid.*, 451.

⁵ Stuart to William Knox, May 18, 1778, CO5/79, 158; same to Germain, May 19, 1778, *ibid.*, 160.

John Stuart assured the Creeks that the Americans were too weak for punitive expeditions, that even if they came the king would protect the natives. Then Stuart raised the question of aid for Governor Tonyn. The Creeks stalled; they could take no action until after the Green Corn festival.⁶ If this answer dismayed Stuart, it would infuriate Tonyn. The testy governor doubtless would blame the superintendent for the inaction of the Creeks.

John Stuart had no monopoly on travail during the winter of 1778. More than a thousand miles to the north, George Washington experienced the legendary winter at Valley Forge. Preparing for the campaign of 1778, the Patriot commander-in-chief sought levies for his depleted ranks. In conference with a congressional committee in January he suggested using free blacks as wagoneers, Indians combined with frontiersmen as rangers. The general believed that "such a body of Indians joined by some of our Woodsmen, would probably strike no small terror into the British and foreign troops, particularly the new comers. The good resulting from the measure, if these savages can be kept in the field at so great a distance from their native haunts, would more than compensate for the trouble and expence they might cost us."⁷

Once again the commander-in-chief turned to his friend Nathaniel Gist. Gist, thought Washington, could recruit three or four hundred Cherokee for service with the army. When approached about the project, Gist was reluctant. On his first venture he had enlisted only seventeen Cherokee, who had served briefly on the eastern shore. That the expenses for that mission were still in arrears also discouraged Gist. Confident that a second recruiting experience would be successful, General Washington secured \$5,000 for Gist from the Continental treasury. Out of that sum the colonel could defray the expenses for both

⁶ John Stuart to Germain, Dec. 4, 1788, CO5/80, 23.

⁷ JCC, X, 221, 228-29; Washington to the Committee of Congress with the Army, Jan. 29, 1778, Washington, *Writings*, ed. Sparks, X, 400-401; same to Philip Schuyler, James Duane, and Volkert P. Douw, Commissioners of Indian Affairs in the Northern Department, March 13, 1778, *ibid.*, I, 76-77.

his southward ventures and the twenty-dollar bounties to frontiersmen who enlisted for six months.⁸ Once again both the commander and his subordinate were disappointed. Frontiersmen could not be lured by bounties; Cherokee could not be persuaded. Of course the tribesmen promised much (as they did to the British at the same time) and did nothing.

Empty promises—that summed up the actions of all the Southern Indians during 1778. If the Cherokee assured all of great intentions and did nothing, so did the other tribes. The Choctaw and Chickasaw, for example, supposedly patrolled the Mississippi and Tennessee rivers as a rear guard against American raids. Confidently John Stuart assured Lord George Germain that “there are considerable parties of Choctaw and Chickasaw scouting upon the Mississippi, who examine every Batteau that passes.”⁹ Thus Stuart was dismayed when early in 1778 the leader of the Choctaw patrol, certain that replacements would return long before they were needed, let his charges go home. The Englishman had been confident that if the Patriots were coming, they would not sail until warm weather. He was then shocked by the sudden arrival of the raiders led by Captain James Willing. En route to New Orleans with dispatches from the Commercial Committee of the Continental Congress for Oliver Pollock, the American commercial agent in the great port, Willing had gathered a band of adventurers along the way. Whether freebooting was authorized in his commission is unclear, but this was the role played by his band from Natchez south to Manchac. The American attack at Manchac reportedly was so swift that Henry Stuart fled to a nearby Spanish post in his nightshirt.¹⁰

⁸ Francis Dana to the President of Congress, March 2, 1778, in William B. Reed, *Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed* (Philadelphia, 1847), I, 421; *JCC*, X, 228–29, 241; “Abstract of Monies received by Joseph Nourse, Paymaster to the Board of War and Ordnance,” Record Group 93, no. 035388, Revolutionary War Records, National Archives; *PCC*, no. 136, II, 157; *ibid.*, 147, IV, 49; *JCC*, XVI, 25.

⁹ Jan. 23, 1778, CO5/79, 67.

¹⁰ Hardy Perry to Farquhar Bethune, Feb. 4, 1778, CO5/79, 116; John

Shocked by the ease with which Willing had descended the Mississippi, Superintendent Stuart ordered Farquhar Bethune, his Choctaw deputy who was visiting him, back to the district. Willing would not return north with ease. Bethune was to enlist Indians and whites, organize detachments, and scout the Mississippi and its tributaries from Manchac to Chickasaw Bluffs. As soon as he could send them, Stuart would have two companies of Loyal Refugees stationed in the Mississippi country. By late April these actions brought Manchac and Natchez under guard, the rivers under surveillance by warriors and provincials.¹¹

Whatever satisfaction the superintendent took from the response to his orders, he was disappointed at conditions generally in the Mississippi District. Although he did not share Governor Peter Chester's belief that "after the great expenses which it has cost Government in supporting these Savages, . . . they cannot be depended upon . . .," John Stuart was troubled.¹² Rivers of rum still flowed into the Choctaw country. Even the chiefs "spoke much against the Carrying of Rum into

Stuart to Germain, March 5, 1778, *ibid.*, 113; Donald Campbell to John Stuart, March 5, 1778, *ibid.*, 91; Alexander Ross to Stuart, March 5, 1778, *ibid.*, 93. In connection with Willing, see John W. Caughey, "Willing's Expedition Down the Mississippi, 1778," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 15 (1932), 5-36; Burnett, *Letters*, II, 565-66; Commercial Committee to Edward Hand, Nov. 21, 1777, *ibid.*; same to Robert Morris, Feb. 21, 1778, *ibid.*, III, 96; J. F. H. Claiborne, *Mississippi, as a Province, Territory, and State* (Jackson, Miss., 1880), I, 117.

¹¹ John Stuart to Farquhar Bethune, March 2, 1778, CO5/79, 120; same to Germain, March 5, 1778, *ibid.*, 113; same to Charles Stuart, March 2, 1778, *ibid.*, 118; Charles Stuart to John Stuart, March 19, 1778, *ibid.*, 103; John Stuart to John McGillivray, March 28, 1778, *ibid.*, 85; John Stuart to Germain, April 13, 1778, *ibid.*, 83; Return of Indians, Traders, etc., Encamped at White Cliffs, Natchez, April 25, 1778, *ibid.*, 162; John Stuart to Germain, May 2, 1778, *ibid.*, 136; same to same, June 3, 1778, *ibid.*, 173; same to same, Aug. 10, 1778, *ibid.*, 188; same to same, Nov. 22, 1778, Clinton Papers, WLCL.

¹² Peter Chester to Augustin Prevost, March 21, 1778, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, I, 213-14; same to Germain, Aug. 27, 1778, CO5/594, 656.

their Land, . . . it was like a Woman—when a man wanted her and saw her—He must have her.”¹³

Also vexing to Stuart were the machinations of the Spanish.¹⁴ Among the Choctaw, agents of Bernardo de Gálvez distributed presents and Spanish commissions. As a result, the Choctaw towns in what is today extreme southern Mississippi were factionalized by the Spanish. Stuart’s counter was to threaten the trade, a point which drove home. One Choctaw hardly needed remind his fellows of the days of the French, “when the best of them would run for any White Man by Day, or by Night, whether Hot or Cold, wet or dry, any distance for a Small Flap [breechcloth]”¹⁵ Outwardly repentant Choctaw begged forgiveness of the British.

Uncovering the roots of Chickasaw waywardness proved more difficult. Obviously something was amiss. The departmental deputy for that tribe, James Colbert, had resigned for no apparent reason. From a visiting Chickasaw leader the superintendent learned that much of the tribe’s reluctance resulted from the persuasion of the traders.¹⁶ If the warriors patrolled, they could not hunt; if they could not hunt, there would be no pelts; if there were no pelts, there would be no trade. Thus self-

¹³ Charles Stuart’s Report of his visit to the Choctaw country, July 1, 1778, CO5/79, 196–202.

¹⁴ Henry Adkins to Charles Stuart, Sept. 7, 1778, CO5/595, pt. 2, 381; Charles Stuart to John Stuart, Sept. 15, 1778, *ibid.*, 385; Peter Chester to Germain, May 7, 1778, CO5/594, 505–506; John W. Caughey, *Bernardo de Gálvez in Louisiana* (Berkeley, 1934), *passim*. In connection with Spanish overtures to the Lower Creeks, see the Tallassee King to Galphin, Oct. 10, 1778, Laurens Papers, Bundle 46, South Carolina Historical Society; Galphin to Laurens, June 25, 1778, *ibid.*; *Gazette of the State of South Carolina*, July 15, 1778, 3; Mark F. Boyd and Jose N. Latorre, “Spanish Interest in British Florida, and in the Progress of the American Revolution,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 32 (1953), 92–130.

¹⁵ Charles Stuart’s Report . . . , July 1, 1778, CO5/79, 196–202.

¹⁶ John Stuart to Charles Stuart, March 2, 1778, CO5/79, 118; same to Germain, Aug. 10, 1778, *ibid.*, 189; same to Peter Chester, Sept. 12, 1778, CO5/80, 56; Chester to John Stuart, Sept. 13, 1778, *ibid.*, 58; John Stuart to Charles Stuart, Sept. 19, 1778, *ibid.*, 61; same to William Knox, Oct. 9, 1778, *ibid.*, 4; Charles Stuart to John Stuart, Nov. 17, 1778, *ibid.*, 54; John Stuart to Germain, Dec. 4, 1778, *ibid.*, 26.

interest dictated that the traders counter Stuart, that the Indian hunters listen.

In the eastern half of his superintendency there were also problems for John Stuart. Of course Patrick Tonyn was unrelenting in his complaints and demands.¹⁷ That the governor might be satisfied, Stuart sent David Holms, a former trader whom Stuart trusted, on a recruiting mission through the Lower Creek towns. In late August, Holms and eighty Creek warriors reached St. Augustine but Governor Tonyn could not be pleased. Too little, too late, he fumed. Moreover, complained Tonyn, was Holms to be trusted, was he not the nephew of the Patriot George Galphin? Fortunately the governor directed his criticisms to Holms and Stuart, not to the Indians. To them he distributed presents and thanks for their coming, boasting as he did so of the ultimate British victory that would come. Were not the king's ships as the sand on the shore and his troops as the leaves on the trees? One warrior wryly retorted that if such were true, "he did not imagine but they were sufficient to subdue the Americans without the help of the red people!"¹⁸

About the time that Holms had left for East Florida, John Stuart finally had learned what the commander-in-chief expected of him in 1778. After assuming command in March, General Henry Clinton withdrew from Philadelphia across New Jersey, struggled past Washington at Monmouth, and returned his troops to New York. He had been ordered there by the same officials who instructed the evacuation of Philadelphia and who now transferred all major operations southward. After all, believed Lord George Germain, were not the majority of the people there Loyalists cowed into submission by a deluded, fanatical minority? Consequently, Germain called for a strike against Savannah by the St. Augustine garrison and three thou-

¹⁷ John Stuart to Germain, Aug. 10, 1778, CO5/79, 184; Journal of David Holms' Journey to St. Augustine, July 14–Oct. 5, 1778, CO5/80, 34 ff.; Tonyn to Holms, Aug. 23, 1778, *ibid.*, 44; Holms to Tonyn, Aug. 25, 1778, *ibid.*; Tonyn to Stuart, Oct. 8, 1778, *ibid.*, 31.

¹⁸ Holms's Journal, CO5/80, 34 ff.

sand troops from England. Simultaneously a western frontier would be opened by the legions under Stuart, now a "colonel of the Indian nations."¹⁹

Thus the superintendent's problem became the delicate one of changing from "go slow" to action without committing the gunmen prematurely. Bad timing would spoil any hope of using the Southern Indians effectively. If his words of instruction were too inflammatory the tribesmen might act rashly. Particularly would this be likely among the Creeks, angered by Georgia frontiersmen who surveyed tribal lands in the face of Indian protest and state proclamations to the contrary. Creek tempers rose so high in August that raiders killed twenty frontier folk. At that moment it appeared that John Stuart could not restrain the Creeks.²⁰

To the Georgia officials the attacks presaged an Indian war. This became their immediate concern since they were not at the time threatened on the coast. The State Executive Council mobilized the militia, transferred the First Continental Battalion from its position south of Savannah toward the frontier, and stipulated that soldiers on British parole might bear arms if the warriors attacked. To their brothers-in-arms in the Carolinas and Virginia, the Georgians pled for help.²¹

Their pleas were received by the South Carolinians with the suspicion born of long experience in frontier politics.²² They

¹⁹ Germain to Clinton, March 8, 1778, in Stevens, *Facsimiles*, XI, no. 1062; same to John Stuart, Nov. 5, 1777, CO5/78, 180; Stuart to Germain, March 5, 1778, CO5/79, 134. For an analysis of the thinking behind Germain's decision see Paul H. Smith, *Loyalists and Redcoats: A Study in British Revolutionary Policy* (Chapel Hill, 1964), *passim*.

²⁰ John Stuart to William Knox, Oct. 9, 1778, CO5/80, 3.

²¹ John Houstoun to Henry Laurens, Oct. 1, 1778, Simms Laurens Papers (film), South Caroliniana Library; Joseph Clay to Edward Telfair, Sept. 1, 1778, in Joseph Clay Letterbook, 1776-1783, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah; Minutes of the Council, Sept. 18, 1778, Georgia Executive Journal, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta; Elbert Order Book, Aug. 19, 1778, *CGHS*, V, pt. 2, 182-83; Minutes of the Council, Aug. 26, 1778, *RRG*, II, 91; Rawlins Lowndes to Richard Caswell, Sept. 9, 1778, *NCCR*, XIII, 216-17.

²² William Thompson to Galphin, Oct. 23, 1778, in A. S. Salley, Jr., *His-*

feared a Georgia land grab in the making. If investigation proved the natives at fault they would assist Georgia; otherwise they would not. Provided the Indians were not guilty, reparations to them might be in order. Quickly concluding that the Creeks were in the wrong, the officials of South Carolina sent General Andrew Williamson and five hundred troops to the frontier.

Whether because of Patriot defense measures or Stuart's admonitions one cannot be certain, but the Creeks did not open full-scale hostilities in the fall of 1778. They had gotten some revenge in the August attacks; additional outbreaks would only insure Patriot retribution.²³

Throughout 1778 most of the attention focused on the Creeks in the South, for the Cherokee, although they talked otherwise, were still broken in power. When the Creeks spoke to them of war in the summer they wanted no part of it.²⁴ They were pressed by the broken promises and continued encroachments of the whites. To the governor of North Carolina, the Raven complained of frontiersmen surveying Indian lands and killing stock there, of tribesmen held hostage months after the war and sold into slavery.²⁵ A sympathetic Governor Richard Caswell apologized to the Cherokee and ordered the trespassers out, but this had little effect.²⁶ The actions of his constituents and their representatives in the state legislature undercut the governor's efforts. In the preceding year, for example, the legislature had authorized a treaty and appointed commissioners for

tory of Orangeburg County, South Carolina (Orangeburg, 1898), 461; Minutes of the Council, Sept. 24, 1778, *RRG*, II, 104-105; Andrew Pickens to John Irvin, Aug. 29, 1778, Gibbes, *Documentary History*, II, 96.

²³ Tonyn to Germain, Sept. 25, 1778, CO5/558, 443.

²⁴ Talks to LeRoy Hammond and Edward Wilkinson, Sept. 26, 1778, Laurens Papers, Bundle 46, South Carolina Historical Society.

²⁵ Patrick Henry to Richard Caswell, May 16, 1778, *NCCR*, XIII, 128-29; Rawlins Lowndes to Caswell, July 2, 1778, *ibid.*, 184-85; same to same, Aug. 6, 1778, *ibid.*, 204-205.

²⁶ Caswell to the Raven, May 5, 1778, *ibid.*, 117-18; Proclamation by Richard Caswell, May 5, 1778, *ibid.*, 115-16; Caswell to Henry, May 25, 1778, *ibid.*, 135-36.

it but then had failed to appropriate sufficient funds. The commissioners flatly refused service under such conditions, for as one wrote, "if we are under such disadvantages as not to be able to support the veracity and dignity of the Government, we think it better to refrain from meeting."²⁷

Governor Caswell attempted to jar his legislature into action by sending them the commissioner's letter, the Raven's complaints and Caswell's reply, along with correspondence from the governors of Virginia and South Carolina regarding Cherokee affairs. Given over to a joint committee of the legislature, the papers prodded the solons to action. As a result of committee recommendations, bills were passed empowering prosecution by the attorney general's office of trespassers on Indian lands and requiring that traders be licensed. Regarding the supposed hostages, the governor investigated and could locate none; he did, however, instruct the Cherokee agent to question the tribesmen further on the matter.²⁸

North Carolina's immediate neighbor on the north found relations with the Cherokee complicated in 1778 by an incident involving a trans-Ohio tribesman. Late in 1777 the well-known Shawnee chief Cornstalk had been assassinated by irreconcilable frontiersmen. Fearing that the Shawnee might draw the Cherokee into a war of revenge, Virginia responded quickly to all Cherokee complaints in the spring of 1778.²⁹ The boundary run in accordance with the treaty was to be adjusted as the natives wished. Too, they might substitute ammunition and salt for the still-undelivered livestock promised in 1777. Despite the

²⁷ William Sharpe to Richard Caswell, Aug. 5, 1778, *ibid.*, 203.

²⁸ Caswell to the General Assembly, Aug. 10, 1778, *ibid.*, XII, 811; Journal of the North Carolina Senate, Aug. 13, 1778, *ibid.*, 779, 806, 808-809; Journal of the North Carolina House of Commons, *ibid.*, 868; James Iredell, *Life and Correspondence of . . .*, ed. Griffith J. McRee (New York, 1857; rpt. 1949), I, 404.

²⁹ William Christian to Joseph Martin, May 13, 1778, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 35; Patrick Henry to Oconostota, n.d., PCC, No. 71, II, 213-15.

intention to please the tribesmen, the salt, gunpowder, and other articles did not start west until August.³⁰

Ironically, it was a long-time acquaintance of the Cherokee who raised the loudest furor in 1778. Nathaniel Gist had been granted the use of the Long Island of the Holston River in appreciation for his services to the tribe. As eager for land as any other frontiersman, Gist now claimed the island as his own, seeking legal confirmation of the land by grant from the Virginia assembly. So loud were the Cherokee protests that Governor Henry recommended against Gist's petition, lest it "interrupt the good understanding at present subsisting with them [the cherokee]." ³¹

The fourth year of the War for American Independence was rather uneventful on the major fields of battle, as was also the case in Southern Indian affairs. Wary of committing themselves too deeply, tribal leaders talked much and did little. Neither the British nor the Americans could tally success in dealings with the natives. However calm 1778, the next year would not be so pedestrian. British military successes in the South would embolden the Indians. At the same time they would be saddened at the death of their beloved superintendent. Subsequently, they would be dismayed at the changes wrought in the department.

³⁰ Christian to Martin, July 8, 1778, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 36; Turner Southall to Martin, Aug. 10, 1778, *ibid.*, 37; Edward Wilkinson to the Chiefs of the Lower Towns, July 5, 1778, PCC, no. 71, II, 181-82.

³¹ Patrick Henry to Oconostota, n.d., PCC, no. 71, II, 213-15; same to the General Assembly, Oct. 14, 1778, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, I, 314; Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 105.

V. A YEAR OF CHANGE



The year 1779 was the one in which the Southern Indians should have kept their promises to assist the king. For the first time since the beginning of the war, British troops held ground south of the Chesapeake. Late in 1778 they had come to Georgia, from the sea and from the south. Savannah quickly fell. Then, acting on a suggestion made by a Loyalist, a British force struck deep into Patriot territory toward Augusta.¹ Supposedly this would hearten the upcountry friends of the king, both white and red.

To the dismay of the British officers only a few hundred Loyalists emerged; the natives were nowhere to be seen.² Where were the vaunted Indian legions and their superintendent? Hundreds of miles away in Pensacola Stuart waited, uninformed of the British invasion timetable. Not until the last week in January, after the force reached Augusta and withdrew in disgust, did the superintendent receive word of the arrival of the king's army in Georgia.³ Eighteenth-century military communications

¹ Moses Kirkland to Clinton, Oct. 13, 1778, Clinton Papers, WLCL; same to the King's Commissioners, Oct. 21, 1778, *ibid.*

² Augustin Prevost to Taitt, March 14, 1779, CO5/80, 246; same to Clinton, March 15, 1779, CO5/98, 162; Archibald Campbell to the Creeks, n.d. [1779], Clinton Papers, WLCL.

³ John Stuart to the Creeks, Feb. 1, 1779, CO5/80, 244; Charles Shaw to Germain, Aug. 7, 1779, *ibid.*, 260; John Stuart to Taitt, Feb. 1, 1779, *ibid.*, 158.

could not carry off a plan so complicated as Germain had envisioned.

Ignorant of events on the Atlantic coast, John Stuart sent his deputies into the Creek nation. After recruiting gunmen and trustworthy traders, the officials would lead their forces toward the Georgia frontier for a rendezvous with royal troops, or so Stuart hoped. David Taitt reached the Upper Creek villages on February 10, gathered about four hundred men during the next three weeks, and started for Georgia.⁴ At the Ogeechee River, Taitt ordered his force into camp, planning to await the troops at that point. If Taitt desired the pause for purposes of discipline, the Indians welcomed it out of caution. An untimely penetration of the settlements could bring down the wrath of the Patriots.

After waiting some days, Taitt and his band learned that troops approached. Soon their initial expectations turned to despair. The force was six hundred Patriot militia led by General Andrew Williamson.⁵ David Taitt urged the natives to stand their ground, but his speeches were rebuffed. Most of the Creeks started for home, swearing "Never again!"

A few accompanied Alexander McGillivray, the Upper Creek assistant commissary, on a successful attempt to reach the army in Savannah; another band crossed over to raid in South Carolina but were turned back; another group, having reconsidered, followed Taitt to Savannah. By the time that these parties plus a few stragglers reached Savannah, there were about three hundred Creeks ready for service with the British army during the spring and summer of 1779.⁶ These native partisans

⁴ Stuart to Taitt, *ibid.*; Taitt to Germain, Aug. 6, 1779, *ibid.*, 234.

⁵ Andrew Williamson to Benjamin Lincoln, Jan. 19, 1779, Andrew Williamson Papers, Univ. of South Carolina, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia.

⁶ James Keef to David Holms, April 27, 1779, CO5/80, 205; Jacob Moniac to the Commissioners, May 1, 1779, *ibid.*, 207; Taitt to Germain, Aug. 6, 1779, *ibid.*, 234 ff.; Charles Shaw to Germain, Aug. 7, 1779, *ibid.*, 260; Patrick Tonym to Clinton, July 13, 1779, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, I, 469-70; *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), May 1, 1779, 2; *ibid.*, Aug. 14, 1779, 2; *ibid.*, May 22, 1779, 2; *Gazette of the State of South Carolina*, July 9, 1779, 1; Wil-

were used by the British commander in raids across the river into South Carolina and in searches for deserters hiding in the swamps.

As the weeks passed the officials found the natives troublesome. On their strikes into South Carolina they confiscated property, including numerous slaves whom they refused to sell. When complaints were lodged against them, the Creeks replied that "they were told by the General before they went into Carolina that whatever plunder they got should be their own property and that they saw the King's Army Seize upon all the Negroes they could get upon which they did the same and intend to carry them to the Nation."⁷

While some of his beloved Indians were serving as he had long promised, John Stuart succumbed to the burdens of his years. As one of his assistants wrote, "after a tedious and painful illness, which he bore with resignation for several months," Stuart died in Pensacola on March 21, 1779.⁸ The British Southern Indian department was plunged into chaos. The superintendent's death coupled with the circumstances of war was a blow from which the bureaucracy developed by Stuart could not recover.

Shortly after John Stuart's death, two of his deputies, Alexander Cameron and Charles Stuart, assumed control, hoping for continuity in the interim until a successor could be named and, of course, consideration for the job. At the same time Governor Peter Chester of West Florida claimed authority over the Indian department, appointing a board of commissioners to function until a new superintendent was commissioned.

liam Moultrie, *Memoirs of the American Revolution, so far as it related to the States of North and South Carolina, and Georgia* (New York, 1802), I, 379.

⁷ Meeting of the Governor's Council, July 26, 1779, Allen D. Candler (ed.), *CRG* (Atlanta, 1904-1926), XII, 444-45; Sir James Wright to Germain, July 31, 1779, *CGHS*, III, 256.

⁸ Alexander Cameron and Charles Stuart to Germain, March 26, 1779, CO5/80, 109. Evidently Stuart had been ill for some months; see John Stuart to Germain, Dec. 4, 1778, *ibid.*, 20; Taitt to Germain, Aug. 6, 1779, *ibid.*, 234 ff.

Cameron and Stuart were aghast at the governor's action. Chester had no right to act. Such a precedent would be disastrous indeed if Patrick Tonyn followed suit. Then the officials of the department would become subordinate to royal governors, a most undesirable arrangement to be sure. Even Brigadier General John Campbell (the commandant at Pensacola) doubted the legality of Chester's action. But he urged that the two deputies set aside their "ambition and Pecuniary views for the sake of Peace Concord and Harmony."⁹ At Campbell's urging Cameron and Stuart promised cooperation with Chester's commissioners. Fortunately for them Tonyn never sought to copy Chester.

Following the lead of Alexander Cameron and Charles Stuart, the departmental representatives in the several Indian nations swallowed their pride and carried out their duties. Sparked by the presence of the British army on the seaboard, they exhorted the natives to action. There were a few Creeks already with the army. The Cherokee deliberated gravely but did little; only the Cherokee led by Dragging Canoe seriously considered action. They were encouraged by the British agents and by Northern Indians who had come south under Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton's orders to organize an uprising of the tribes. Early in April about two hundred Chickamauga and Loyalists set out for Savannah.¹⁰ Doubtless those who went did

⁹ Alexander Cameron and Charles Stuart to Germain, *ibid.*; John Campbell to Cameron and Stuart, March 27, 1779, *ibid.*, 151; Cameron and Stuart to Campbell, March 29, 1779, *ibid.*, 153; Charles Stuart to the Board of Commissioners, March 31, 1779, *ibid.*, 161; Cameron and Stuart to Germain, April 10, 1779, *ibid.*, 142. The members of the commission appointed by Chester were Andrew Rainsford, John Mitchell, Robert Tait, Alexander Macullagh, and David Holms. See Minutes of the Board of Indian Commissioners, April 28–June 30, 1779, *ibid.*, 248–50.

¹⁰ Walter Scott to Alexander Cameron, March 27, 1779, *ibid.*, 179; Robert Dews to Cameron, April 9, 1779, *ibid.*, 177; Talk from the Cowee Warrior to John Stuart, n.d., *ibid.*, 175; Frederic Haldimand to Henry Hamilton, Aug. 26, 1778, "Haldimand Papers," *Michigan Pioneer Collections*, II, 403; Henry Hamilton to John Stuart, Dec. 25, 1778, CO5/597, pt. 1, 121; same to Haldimand, July 6, 1781, Germain Papers, XIV, WLCL.

so with mixed emotions; Patriot propaganda had it that their towns would be raided in their absence.

The deliberations and visitations in the Chickamauga towns were by no means hidden from Virginia's Cherokee agent, Joseph Martin. In turn he warned the governor of the plans. Well aware of the frontier practice of defense by offense, Governor Patrick Henry organized an expedition against the hostile towns. Commissioning Colonel Evan Shelby as leader of three hundred militia, the governor secured another two hundred men from North Carolina. Since at the same time Henry was sending reinforcements to George Rogers Clark in the Illinois country, that force under Colonel John Montgomery joined the frontiersmen.¹¹ Leaving the Long Island of the Holston River by boat on April 10, 1779, the Patriots reached the Chickamauga towns within ten days. There they destroyed towns, crops, and British goods cached for raids, killing some half-dozen warriors. Whether there would have been effective resistance if the absent warriors had been at home is problematical. The damage was done. Montgomery and his men continued toward the Illinois country; the Virginia and North Carolina forces started homeward.¹²

Since the Chickamauga who had set out for Savannah were not far past the South Carolina frontier, they returned at the news of the Patriot raid. As they viewed their devastated villages their minds filled with thoughts of revenge. Consequently, when Alexander Cameron arrived in their towns in mid-summer

¹¹ Patrick Henry to Richard Caswell, Jan. 8, 1779, Caswell Papers, Raleigh; James Robertson to Caswell, Jan. 14, 1779, *ibid.*; Henry to Washington, March 13, 1779, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, I, 359; North Carolina House of Commons Journal, Jan. 19, 1779, *NCCR*, XIII, 628; North Carolina Senate Journal, Jan. 20, 1779, *ibid.*, 537, 539; North Carolina House of Commons Journal, Jan. 25, 1779, *ibid.*, 655; same, Feb. 1, 1779, *ibid.*, 678; John Montgomery to the Board of Commissioners for settling Western accounts, Feb. 22, 1783, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 442; George Rogers Clark to Henry, April 29, 1779, Jefferson, *Papers*, II, 259.

¹² Evan Shelby to Henry, June 4, 1779, PCC, no. 71, 265; Minutes of the Virginia Council of State, July 23, 1779, Draper Colls., Frontier Wars (UNC), II, 63.

at the head of a company of Loyal Refugees, they listened to Cameron's urgings. Soon about three hundred warriors joined the whites in a trek toward the South Carolina frontier.¹³

Once again the Patriots had learned of their coming. Once again it was General Andrew Williamson who led seven hundred light horsemen toward the hostile band. As the two forces drew near each other, Williamson practiced a bit of psychological warfare. He promised the Indians unmolested passage homeward if they delivered over Alexander Cameron and the other British leaders. The natives did not respond but what Williamson's persuasion could not accomplish, Indian imagination did. Like the Hebrew spies of old, the Cherokee scouts magnified the strength of their adversaries. A Patriot force that numbered 750 was doubled in the reports to Cameron. Demanding that their predicament be discussed, the Cherokee argued for withdrawing until they could fight on better terms. When Alexander Cameron could not prevail upon them, the band broke up and retreated. General Williamson led his men past the frontier to the easternmost Chickamauga towns, where he made swift use of the torch.¹⁴

While the officials and natives in the eastern half of the British Indian department met military misfortune, in the west friction arose between departmental officials and the board of commissioners appointed by Chester after John Stuart's death. Charles Stuart was miffed because the commissioners had no financial standing. In need of goods for ransoming some settlers captured by the Chickasaw, Stuart signed short-term notes for the goods. When the commissioners complained, he responded that he "could not get the goods upon any Other terms—and I

¹³ Cameron to Germain, May 10, 1779, CO5/80, 171; Board of Commissioners to Cameron, May 20, 1779, CO5/81, 87; same to Germain, July 12, 1779, *ibid.*, 73; Augustin Prevost to Germain, Nov. 1, 1779, Stevens, *Facsimiles*, XXIII, no. 2020.

¹⁴ Cameron to Germain, Dec. 18, 1779, CO5/81, 37; Washington to Governor George Clinton, Oct. 20, 1779, Washington, *Writings of . . .*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington, D. C., 1931-1944), XVI, 39; *Gazette of the State of South Carolina*, Sept. 24, 1779, 2.

must also let you know that I Wou'd not have got them at all upon your Credit and was therefore Obligated before I could Obtain a Shirt to give My Own Obligation for Payment & which I understand still stands against me."¹⁵

Also having difficulties with the board was Farquhar Bethune, the Choctaw deputy. Accused of overstepping his powers, Bethune retorted that he was responsible only to the superintendent, not "to any number of Gentlemen however respectable . . ."¹⁶

Even General John Campbell was having difficulty with the commissioners.¹⁷ Their disagreement was over pay for the companies of traders and Loyalists recruited by the late John Stuart under orders from General William Howe. Campbell argued that pay for the first six months of 1779 should be paid by the board. The commissioners would accept responsibility only for the period after they took office on March 30, 1779.

On the plus side it could be said that the board carried out departmental affairs as best it could. Two of the commissioners even journeyed into the Indian country as a superintendent might have done.¹⁸ David Holms recruited in the Creek villages, hoping that more warriors would join the army. Robert Tait visited the Choctaw, rewarding them for their services at Natchez and seeking pledges of continued loyalty. Assisting Tait was Farquhar Bethune, who had made his peace with the board.

While Holms and Tait were absent from Pensacola, their

¹⁵ Charles Stuart to Germain, May 6, 1779, CO5/80, 167; same to the Board of Indian Commissioners, May 12, 1779, CO5/81, 248-50.

¹⁶ Commissioners to Farquhar Bethune, April 21, 1779, CO5/80, 225; Bethune to the Commissioners, May 1, 1779; *ibid.*, 228; Peter Chester to John Stuart, Feb. 14, 1779, *ibid.*, 226.

¹⁷ John Campbell to Germain, April 7, 1779, CO5/597, pt. 1, 167; same to Clinton, May 31, 1779, CO5/598, 23-24.

¹⁸ Minutes of the Board of Indian Commissioners, May 30, 1779, CO5/80, 81; same, Aug. 5, 1779, *ibid.*, 284-301; Commissioners to Holms, May 30, 1779, CO5/81, 82; Tait to Germain, Aug. 6, 1779, CO5/80, 234 ff.; Tonyn to Tait, July 28, 1779, *ibid.*, 256; Prevost's Meeting with the Creeks at Savannah, Aug. 2, 1779, *ibid.*, 258; William Knox to Tait, Oct. 25, 1779, *ibid.*, 271; Board to Robert Tait, July 11, 1779, CO5/81, 85; same to Germain, July 13, 1779, *ibid.*, 94.

fellows received a band of formerly pro-American Upper Creeks.¹⁹ Momentarily dissatisfied because Galphin was short of supplies, this delegation came south, hoping that their apologies would bring rewards. Doubtless impressed by their hospitable hosts, they were disappointed at the paucity of goods. Although they seemed to accept the explanation that so scarce were goods the soldiers were on short rations, they must have wondered how soon George Galphin would have provisions.

In the meantime David Holms found the Lower Creeks well disposed. More than two hundred were recruited as raiders against South Carolina. Holms's major problem in recruitment was provisions, for "without Presents the Indians . . . are not to be depended on."²⁰ When news came that a ship bearing supplies for the Indian department had docked in Savannah, Holms set out for the coast. With him went about one hundred and twenty Lower Creeks and thirty-five whites. While he carried out his business, the irregulars joined the Creeks already with the army in raiding across the river into South Carolina. A Loyalist newspaper editor commented that the warriors obeyed orders, "refraining from acts of barbarity against women, children and peaceable inhabitants."²¹

Although the Creeks and Cherokee were the only tribes within distance to serve with the army, the western tribes were expected to aid in river defense. In late summer General Campbell had warning of a strike by the Patriots against Natchez. That the Willing success might not be repeated, the general and the commissioners wanted the Choctaw at Natchez and the Chickasaw patrolling the Mississippi.²² Their plans hit a tem-

¹⁹ Minutes of the Board of Indian Commissioners, June 6, 1779, CO5/81, 248-80.

²⁰ David Holms to the Board of Commissioners, June 23, 1779, in Minutes of Board, July 5-Sept. 30, 1779, CO5/81, 284-301; Board to Germain, July 12, *ibid.*, 73; Sir James Wright to Germain, Aug. 1, 1779, CGHS, III, 257; *Royal Georgia Gazette*, Aug. 29, 1779, 2.

²¹ Augustin Prevost to Clinton, Aug. 2, 1779, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 3.

²² Board of Commissioners to Germain, July 12, 1779, CO5/81, 73; Jefferson to Washington, June 19, 1779, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, II, 13; Order of Virginia Council Placing Henry Hamilton and Others in Irons,

porary snag when Charles Stuart balked. He would serve with the militia officer at Natchez, not under him. Too, Stuart demanded that the Choctaw be supplied while they were on duty. When his conditions were met, then Charles Stuart set about his task.

In the midst of these preparations came the first intimation of new Indian policies in the South. According to the commandant at St. Augustine, word had come from Lord George Germain that whites recruited for service with the Indians now had to be enlisted as provincials or dismissed. Moreover, no natives might serve except at the request of a military officer. Since these changes affected preparations for the defense of Natchez, General Campbell requested one hundred and fifty warriors at that post. The commissioners instructed the Chickasaw agent that no river patrols be recruited unless so ordered by the commander at Natchez.²³

The new approach also affected matters of supply. Provisions for warriors could be requisitioned only by the officer ordering their services. This regulation raised a problem when the commissioners needed ammunition for some Lower Creeks going east. When a request was put to General Campbell, he declined; since the gunmen were going to the aid of General Augustin Prevost at Savannah, Prevost could supply them.²⁴

Additional instructions from Lord George Germain concerning the British Indian department reached Pensacola in

June 16, 1779, Jefferson, *Papers*, II, 293; George Rogers Clark to Jefferson, Feb. 3, 1779, Palmer, *Calendar*, I, 315; Substance of a conference with the Indians, Jan. 26, 1779, in H. W. Beckwith, "George Rogers Clark's Conquest of the Illinois Country," *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, I (1903), 394-95; Jacob Moniac to the Board of Commissioners, May 1, 1779, CO5/81, 207; Charles Stuart to Germain, May 6, 1779, CO5/80, 284 ff.; Board of Commissioners to Charles Stuart, Aug. 5, 1779, CO5/81, 284 ff.; same to Germain, July 12, 1779, *ibid.*, 73; Charles Stuart to Board, Aug. 17, 1779, *ibid.*, 284-301; Minutes of the Board, Aug. 18, 1779, *ibid.*

²³ Germain to John Stuart, March 3, 1779, CO5/81, 18; Board of Commissioners to John McIntosh, Aug. 23, 1779, *ibid.*, 284-301.

²⁴ Timothy Barnard to the Board, Aug. 22, 1779, *ibid.*, 284 ff.; James Campbell to the Board, Sept. 1, 1779, *ibid.*; Board to Barnard, Sept. 3, 1779, *ibid.*; same to Alexander McGillivray, Sept. 3, 1779, *ibid.*

October. Believing that the department was too much for one man, Germain had divided it; Alexander Cameron was appointed superintendent of the Mississippi District, which included the Choctaw and Chickasaw; Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Brown of the East Florida Rangers was named head of the Atlantic District, where the Cherokee and Creeks lived. Both men were subordinate to the ranking military officer in their district; for the balance of the war they would supply auxiliaries for the army when so requested.²⁵

Changes also were made by Germain in financial arrangements. No longer could bills be drawn on the Lords of the Treasury as Stuart had done since 1775. Now each district would have an annual budget of £1,955 for salaries, "Presents, Rum, Provisions, Carriage and all other Contingencies."²⁶ Other expenses might be incurred only by order of the military department, which would provide the funds.

The reasons for these alterations were political and economic. In March of 1779 when Parliament considered money bills, among them was one for the army's extraordinary expenses in 1778. Aroused by the rising costs of the prolonged war, the members of the Commons, and particularly the members of the opposition, examined the list with care. They were staggered by the funds disbursed for Indian affairs, especially in the South. David Hartley, M.P. from Hull, moved that certain expenses be explained before monies were approved. Colonel Isaac Barre, who represented Calne, complained that the prices being paid were too high, that "most enormous sums of money had been drawn for in bills by the governors of the islands, and the superintendent of the Indians, without leave, without powers."²⁷

²⁵ Germain to Cameron and Brown, June 25, 1779, *ibid.*, 123; Prevost to Clinton, Nov. 7, 1779, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 59; Germain to Clinton, June 25, 1779, HMC, *Stopford-Sackville Mss.* (London, 1904), II, 131.

²⁶ Germain to Cameron and Brown, June 25, 1779, CO5/81, 123; John Campbell to Cameron, Dec. 18, 1779, *ibid.*, 63; Germain to Campbell, Aug. 5, 1779, CO5/597, pt. 1, 224.

²⁷ Almon, *Parliamentary Register*, XII, 255; 257; *The Dictionary of National Biography Founded in 1882 by George Smith: The Concise Dictionary, Part 1, From the Beginnings to 1900, Being an Epitome of the Main*

From that point the discussion moved to John Stuart's expenditures. Although he had not acted "without leave, without powers," as Barre asserted, he had spent freely. Edmund Burke proposed striking from the bill the "Article thereof, intituled, 'To bills of Exchange drawn by John Steward Esquire, Superintendant of Indian Affairs in the Southern District and amounting to the Sum of £63,306 8s 2½d.'" ²⁸ What dismayed these critics, who had before them a precis of presents sent out to the Indians, 1775-1779, was that Stuart had disbursed his annual allotment, extra monies, and the provisions sent annually as the king's gift to the natives.

They could see that for the year 1778 the superintendent had been sent nearly £14,000 in goods; in addition he had spent nearly £63,000. ²⁹ And to what purpose, asked the members of Parliament? More had been spent in the third year of war than in the first two combined. Had there been a corresponding increase in activity by the Indians? There was no evidence of any. Although the supporters of government managed defeat of motions aimed at refusing payment, Germain had soon written Stuart, warning him that he must be careful. If possible he should return to his prewar budget of approximately £5,000. ³⁰

Reviewing the expenses of the Indian officials in the South

Work and its Supplement, ed. Sidney Lee (London, 1961), 65, 580. In connection with the growing drive for economy by the British, see Murray S. Downs, "British Parliamentary Opinion and American Independence, 1776-1783," paper given at the Thirteenth Conference on Early American History, Columbia, S. C., March 23, 1962; *idem*, "Kings, Ministers, and Parliament, 1774-1784," Diss., Duke Univ., 1959, ch. 5.

²⁸ Almon, *Parliamentary Register*, XII, 258 ff.; John Fortescue (ed.), *The Correspondence of King George the Third* (London, 1928), IV, 315; *Journal of the House of Commons* (London, 1804), XXXVI, 297.

²⁹ Almon, *Parliamentary Register*, XII, 195-97; *Journal of the House of Commons*, XXVI, 230; *Precis of Orders for Sending Indian Presents, 1775-1779*, William Knox Papers, WLCL.

³⁰ Germain to Stuart, March 3, 1779, CO5/81, 18. For later discussions of the same subject, see Evan Nepean to Knox, Dec. 17, 1782, Knox Papers, WLCL; Knox to the Lords of the Treasury, n.d. [but after Aug. 1782], *ibid.*; William Vaughan to Shelburne, Nov. 9, 1782, Earl of Shelburne Papers, vol. 67, 331, WLCL.

and reflecting on the parliamentary debate, Germain drew some hasty conclusions. Stuart's deputies were guilty of peculation; the superintendent himself was suspect. Germain regarded John Stuart's action in drawing his entire annual estimate on the first day of the year as "reason to suspect he intended to draw as large a Sum of the Public's Money into his Hand as he possibly could."³¹ Nothing Germain believed could be substantiated, but Stuart's death provided the colonial secretary an opportunity to reorganize the British Southern Indian department and to control its spending.

None of the reasons for the changes were explained to Cameron and Brown. They heard only accusations. Alexander Cameron was particularly dismayed, since he had served with John Stuart for many years.³² Disappointed that he did not succeed Stuart, shocked at his appointment to the Mississippi District rather than the more familiar Atlantic one, Alexander Cameron found the new financial regulations incomprehensible. He was worried. How could relations with the tribes be cemented without conferences and the requisite provisions, which of course were dear? The proposed budget of £1,955 was inadequate. Cameron proposed an alternate figure of £4,450, which he regarded as more reasonable, though it was by no means liberal.³³

Since Alexander Cameron could not wait for Germain's reply, he went to work with what he had. Immediately he began

³¹ Germain to Cameron, Aug. 5, 1779, CO5/80, 232. For Cameron's defense of Stuart, see Cameron to Germain, May 1, 1780, CO5/81, 204; same to same, July 18, 1780, *ibid.*, 206.

³² Brown to Germain, Dec. 31, 1779, CO5/81, 151; Cameron to Germain, Dec. 18, 1779, *ibid.*, 37; Alden, *Stuart*, 187; Clinton to Cameron, April 29, 1779, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, I, 423; same to Prevost, May 2, 1779, *ibid.*, 426. With respect to Cameron's appointment, Germain explained: "I was not uninformed of Your Influence with the Cherokees, and I had some Expectation that the King's Service would reap Advantage from it in Your new Situation." See Germain to Cameron, April 5, 1780, CO5/81, 105.

³³ Cameron to Germain, Dec. 20, 1779, CO5/81, 42; same to Clinton, Dec. 15, 1779, *ibid.*, 51; Cameron's estimate for the necessary men and expenses for the department, Dec. 1779, *ibid.*, 55.

to see what he regarded as the flaws in the new system. Parties of Creeks long accustomed to visit Pensacola in search of hand-outs continued to arrive. The new arrangements required that they be sent to their superintendent, Thomas Brown, in Savannah. But could Cameron turn them away? Although it might not be disastrous, it was not politic. At his insistence General Campbell and Governor Chester provisioned the visitors.³⁴

Another of Cameron's pressing problems was the continuation of Spanish efforts among the Choctaw. Representatives from the tribe had visited Bernardo de Gálvez in New Orleans. Alexander Cameron knew that Gálvez's presents would make the Choctaw less tractable. As one chief put it, "Two People loves us whoever gives us the most will be the most Regarded. . . ." ³⁵ Unable to enter such a competition because provisions were scarce, Cameron feared that there would be no Choctaw warriors available when General Campbell needed them for the defense of Pensacola.

While the Choctaw played the coquette, the Chickasaw stood firm. Their courageous loyalty especially heartened Cameron, who was gratified by their independence—"they are a proud and politick people known to be brave and of a more free and independent spirit [than the Choctaw], . . . [who] very seldom come to this province to beg as the Chactaws do but pride themselves in hunting for their own maintainance." ³⁶

³⁴ Cameron to Germain, *ibid.*; same to Chester, Dec. 25, 1779, *ibid.*, 65.

³⁵ Lt. Col. von Fuser to Clinton, Oct. 24, 1779, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 39; James Colbert to Cameron, Nov. 19, 1779, CO5/81, 69; Charles Stuart to Cameron, Dec. 20, 1779, *ibid.*, 47; A Talk from the Six Towns in the Choctaw Nation to Capt. Colbert, Acting Commissary, Nov. 19, 1779, *ibid.*, 57; John Campbell to Clinton, Sept. 14, 1779, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 32; Account for gunpowder, rum, etc., Dec. 27, 1779, *ibid.*, 77; Statement of Provisions issued to the Choctaw Indians at Mobile, Nov. 24 to Dec. 1779, *ibid.*, II, 78; Account with Troup and Co. for Provisions, Nov. 24, to Dec. 31, 1779, *ibid.*, 78; Account with Troup and Co. for gunpowder issued by Charles Stuart to the Choctaw, 1, 9, Dec. 1779, *ibid.*, 71; Caughey, *Gálvez*, ch. 9; George C. Osborn, "Major-General John Campbell in British West Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 27 (1949), 317-39.

³⁶ Charles Stuart to Alexander Cameron, Dec. 20, 1779, CO5/81, 47;

Equally encouraging to the superintendent was their response to Patriot attempts at intimidation. When threatened by the Patriots, they responded: "[we] only desire you will inform us when you are coming and we will save you the trouble of coming quite here for we will meet you halfway, for we have heard so much of it that it makes our heads ach [*sic*]. Take care that we don't serve you as we have served the French before with all their Indians, Send you back without your Heads."³⁷

The particular object of Chickasaw scorn was the state of Virginia, with which they were in disagreement over land in western Kentucky. To the leaders of Virginia, however, relations with the Cherokee were of more immediate concern than those with the Chickasaw. The state agent among the Cherokee, Joseph Martin, was disturbed. In the fall of 1779 a survey party running the Virginia–North Carolina boundary parleyed with the Cherokee about the presence of whites in the west, then dismissed the tribal leaders with nothing more than a fare-thee-well. Martin feared the surveyors might pay for their parsimony.³⁸

Joseph Martin's superior, Governor Thomas Jefferson, was concerned about this incident and about the extreme shortage of supplies.³⁹ When the Cherokee agent visited the governor late in 1779, Jefferson suggested that the problem of supply might be met by Virginia's taking responsibility for supplying the Overhills, North Carolina the Middle settlements, and South Carolina the Lower Towns. Economics and the adage of divide and conquer might be applied *pari passu*. After this conference Jefferson sent Martin south into North Carolina to buy

Talk from the Chickasaw to the Spanish, March 8, 1779, CO5/80, 169; same to the Rebels, March 8, 1779, PCC, no. 51, II, 41–42.

³⁷ Chickasaw to the Rebels, March 8, 1779, PCC, no. 51, II, 41–42.

³⁸ William Christian to William Preston, Oct. 22, 1779, Draper Colls., Preston Papers (Duke), V, 11; Talk to the Tassel, Hanging Maw, Tosity, and Pott-Clay, Chiefs and Warriors of the Cherokee Nation, 1779, PCC, no. 71, I, 335–36.

³⁹ Jefferson to John Rutledge, Nov. 11, 1779, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, II, 62–63, 63–64.

supplies. If possible the Indian agent might confer with Governor Richard Caswell about Indian problems common to the two states.⁴⁰ Matters of supply and encroachment by whites from both states on Indian lands were pressing problems; also acute was the matter of a North Carolinian's attempt to obtain a patent for the Long Island of the Holston River.

Because his horse gave out at Halifax, North Carolina, Martin could only outline his concerns in a letter to Caswell.⁴¹ This also gave him an opportunity to explain that demarcation of the new boundary between the two states placed his residence in North Carolina. In the event that he was needed, he would gladly serve as Cherokee agent for North Carolina.⁴²

All in all the year was one of defeat, disappointment, and change. Patriot activity with the Southern Indians was curtailed by the presence of the British army in Georgia. Indian officials like George Galphin were without provisions, in danger of capture. The Virginians managed a raid against the Chickamauga, keeping that faction back on their heels. For the British, on the other hand, the year was indeed significant. The appearance of a royal army south of the Chesapeake did not rally the natives as long predicted. Most shattering of all was the death of the long-time Indian superintendent. The department would not recover from his demise and the changes wrought thereafter. For the Southern Indians, however, greater change was yet to come. Spanish and Patriot military successes would restrict British operations and finally limit them to St. Augustine, an inconvenient place indeed for the British Indian officials to be headquartered.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*; same to the Board of Trade, Oct. 30, 1779, Jefferson, *Papers*, III, 125.

⁴¹ Joseph Martin to Richard Caswell, Nov. 19, 1779, *NCCR*, XIV, 227; James Robertson to Caswell, Jan. 14, 1779, *ibid.*, 246-48; North Carolina Senate Journal, Jan. 29, 1779, *ibid.*, XIII, 566.

⁴² Martin to Caswell, Dec. 17, 1779, *NCCR*, XIV, 234-35; Evan Shelby to Caswell, Dec. 18, 1779, *ibid.*, 235-36; Meeting of the North Carolina Council, Feb. 11, 1780, *ibid.*, XXII, 965.

VI. PROMISES FULFILLED



In 1779 Superintendent Stuart's death and the reaction to it, Lord George Germain's directives, and Patriot demands and raids were only part of the pressures pushing the Southern Indians. Now the Spanish, long the clandestine suitors of the Gulf tribes, operated freely, their masks stripped by the Convention of Aranjuez, which brought Spain into the war. At New Orleans, Bernardo de Gálvez was coy no longer. Openly he courted the Creeks and the Choctaw, his goal the elimination of these warriors as British auxiliaries. Removing them would help his plans for operations at both Natchez and Pensacola.¹

Charged with the defense of both these British outposts in West Florida was General John Campbell, whose headquarters were at Pensacola.² Frustrated by his appointment to a backwater of the British ocean, Campbell marked time, learning little about the circumstances around him. He wanted warriors ready at his call for defending Pensacola, Mobile, and Natchez, but he made no effort to court the native gunmen. He did not

¹ John R. Alden, *The American Revolution, 1775-1783* (New York, 1962), 190-91; Arthur P. Whitaker, *The Spanish-American Frontier, 1783-1795* (Gloucester, Mass., 1962), 84-85; John Campbell to Clinton, Feb. 10, 1780, CO5/99, 116; David Holms to Doctor Turnbull, Feb. 18, 1780, Clinton Papers, Secretary of State Letterbooks, no. 3, WLCL.

² Osborn, "Campbell in West Florida," 317-39.

learn that they could not be kept at post for weeks on end without some means of keeping spirits high. But worst by far was his capriciousness in calling and then dismissing his auxiliaries.

Campbell's myopia first cost him Mobile. During late 1779 and early 1780, several hundred Choctaw encamped nearby. As the weeks dragged by, official stinginess and their own boredom drove them home. Only eighteen remained when the Spanish fleet stood into the bay on February 10, 1780.³ Immediately the British sent out pleas for help. Captain Elias Durnford, the commandant, begged Campbell for reinforcements; Charles Stuart, Cameron's deputy, pled for the return of the Choctaw. Both men wasted their efforts. Before replies could come the Dons had taken the post. Into their hands fell the commandant, his garrison and stores, Charles Stuart and provisions for a forthcoming conference between Cameron and the Choctaw, and an unemployed and unhappy David Taitt.⁴

Alexander Cameron's gloom over the fall of Mobile and its attendant disasters for his department was not lightened in any measure by having General Campbell as his superior. Cameron was infuriated by the general's philosophy regarding auxiliaries. At the slightest hint of trouble Campbell demanded hundreds of warriors assembled, properly armed and led. When the danger had passed, the gunmen were dismissed with little more than goodby. What, asked Cameron, did the general expect

³ Charles Stuart to Alexander Cameron, Feb. 12, 1780, CO5/81, 183; Account for articles for the use of war Indians, certified by Elias Durnford as to purchase and by Farquhar Bethune as to the issue, Dec. 30, 1779, to Jan. 15, 1780, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 82; Statement of provisions issued to the Choctaw Indians at Mobile in January 1780, certified by Henery [sic] Nicholas and Elias Durnford, Jan. 1, to Jan. 31, 1780, *ibid.*, 85; Troup and Co.'s receipt [£257 4s 9d], June 1, 1780, *ibid.*

⁴ Alexander Cameron to Germain, July 18, 1780, CO5/81, 206; Charles Stuart to Cameron, Feb. 1780, *ibid.*, 183; Elias Durnford to General John Campbell, March 2, 1780, in William Beer, "The Capture of Fort Charlotte, Mobile," *Publications of the Louisiana Historical Society* I (1896), pt. 3, 33; Cameron to Clinton, July 1780, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 159-60; Caughey, *Gálvez*, 182; Cameron to Germain, Feb. 19, 1780, CO5/81, 181; same to Brown, June 25, 1780, *ibid.*, 234.

from such practices? If Campbell persisted he would find it impossible "to get any person of spirit to be employed."⁵

There was little about which the two Scots agreed. Regarding the Creeks who still came to Pensacola, General Campbell reversed his original position. He would not supply them as Cameron requested; they could go to Savannah. A fearful Alexander Cameron assumed responsibility for supplying the visitors.

In Savannah, meantime, Colonel Thomas Brown of the Atlantic Division of the British Southern Indian Department was having problems also. By Germain's order the superintendent's first responsibility was to the ranking officer in his district. Early in 1780 Brown's technical superior in the vicinity was a man of rank indeed, Sir Henry Clinton. Clinton's presence signified the beginning of the British move against Charleston. After meeting with his subordinates in Savannah, Clinton gave his orders and reboarded his ship for a sail north to a debarkation point below Charleston. In his conversations with Superintendent Brown, the commander urged that the Indians be restrained temporarily. Of no use in the slow process of move and counter-move involved in a siege, later they could assist in subduing the rebellion in the upcountry.⁶

Thomas Brown therefore remained in Savannah, where he could carry out his duties and receive any warriors who sought service with the army. In March of 1779, about three hundred Chickamauga Cherokee got through the upcountry and reached the coast. Hardly had they arrived when smallpox began raging in the vicinity. Familiar with the ravages of the disease from an epidemic in the Cherokee country some years before, the band fled. Before they departed, General Prevost managed thanks and rewards for them. A good investment, thought Thomas

⁵ Cameron to Germain, Feb. 19, 1780, CO5/81, 181; same to Brown, June 25, 1780, *ibid.*, 234.

⁶ Willcox, *Clinton*, 300, 304-309; James Wright to Germain, Feb. 10, 1780, *CGHS*, III, 275; Brown to Germain, March 10, 1780, CO5/81, 155.

Brown, and a far cry indeed from the practices of Alexander Cameron's commander.⁷

Though these Cherokee and others of that tribe might respond if Prevost had needed them at that time, the Creeks could not have done so. They were en route to Pensacola in answer to Campbell's entreaties. That post was being threatened by the forces of Bernardo de Gálvez, who had been emboldened by his success at Mobile to push on. In response to Campbell's call for auxiliaries came nearly two thousand gunmen, resplendent in the colors of war, led by departmental commissaries like Alexander McGillivray and William McIntosh.⁸

Whatever General John Campbell may have thought about his auxiliaries, Bernardo de Gálvez was impressed. British regulars and provincials inside a fort did not bother Gálvez; forest soldiers on his flanks did. The Spaniard settled down to a waiting game; perhaps the British allies would tire and go home. In the meantime he lodged a formal complaint with Campbell against the barbarity of using such allies. The British officer was unmoved. He would use all possible means of defending his post. Six weeks passed and half the natives went home. But more than a thousand remained. They too were weary, many of them sick as well as bored, salted provisions and bad water having seen to that. Given a few weeks more, the patient Gálvez might have tasted victory, but the arrival of a British fleet turned him away.⁹

⁷ Augustin Prevost to Clinton, March 2, 1780, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 96; same to same, March 19, 1780, *ibid.*, 104; Brown to Germain, March 10, 1780, CO5/81, 155; same to same, March 18, 1780, *ibid.*, 162; David H. Corkran, *The Cherokee Frontier: Conflict and Survival, 1740-1762* (Norman, 1962), 17.

⁸ Extract of a letter from William McIntosh, March 20, 1780, CO5/81, 167; William McIntosh, Account of expenses incurred at a meeting of the Lower Creeks, n.d., HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 103; Alexander McGillivray to Brown, March 25, 1780, CO5/81, 169; Augustin Prevost to Clinton, April 12, 1780, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 112; McGillivray to Brown, May 13, 1780, CO5/81, 240; Brown to Germain, April 11, 1780, *ibid.*, 165; William McIntosh to Brown, May 5, 1780, *ibid.*, 240; Charles Shaw to Germain, June 19, 1780, Germain Papers, XII, WLCL; Andrew Williamson to Benjamin Lincoln, March 7, 1780, Revolutionary War Collection, Duke Univ., Durham.

⁹ Gálvez to John Campbell, April 9, 1780, CO5/597, pt. 1, 413-15; Camp-

As far as the British Indian Department was concerned, the events at Pensacola were cause for rejoicing. At last the Southern Indians had served in the manner so long promised. Even General Campbell, no friend, asserted over and over again that the appearance of the Indians had saved Pensacola.¹⁰

But still the general remained myopic.¹¹ Since Gálvez would return, prudence would suggest to Campbell that he be certain that the natives would also. Alexander Cameron pled with the general for the retention of one hundred warriors as scouts. Unwisely the commandant flatly refused. Equally unfortunate was his continued insistence that Creek visitors (his admitted deliverers!) be referred to Thomas Brown and Augustin Prevost in Savannah. They were not his responsibility! Perhaps Alexander Cameron was unwise in his own obstinacy, for he supplied the visitors, billing Brown for what he gave them.

By June so strained were relations between the general and the superintendent that Campbell refused certification of Cameron's accounts. Too, he ordered the dismissal of a number of irregulars retained by Cameron as Indian leaders. Alexander Cameron argued for their continuance. Would they be available when needed again if dismissed summarily? Why not keep them active by incorporating them and others into a troop of horse? They would be useful as a bodyguard for Cameron and as partisans in encounters with Spanish and Patriots. General Campbell dismissed the proposals. The cost could not be justified; the idea of a retinue for the Indian superintendent was preposter-

bell to Clinton, May 13, 1780, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 121; James Campbell to Cameron, April 27, 1780, CO5/81, 216; McGillivray to Brown, May 13, 1780, *ibid.*, 242. While on service the Indians expected provision for all their needs. See for example: Account of extra expenses incurred by Cameron for rewards and presents to Indian parties employed for the defense of Mobile, and Pensacola, Jan. 1, 1780, to March 31, 1780, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 108; Account with John Falconer and Company for Indian Breakfasts, dinner, and suppers, April 1, to May 26, 1780, *ibid.*, 127; Account for wine to Ingones [*sic*], May 7, 1780, *ibid.*, 119.

¹⁰ John Campbell to Thomas Brown, Nov. 15, 1780, Clinton Papers, WLCL; same to McGillivray, Nov. 22, 1780, CO5/82, 451.

¹¹ Cameron to Brown, June 25, 1780, CO5/81, 234.

ous. An unhappy Alexander Cameron complained to Sir Henry Clinton that he was "limited to a pittance, and that General Campbell means only to listen to calls or supplications of Indians when he wants their aid."¹²

If the bridle against which Cameron chafed was John Campbell, the rider was George Germain. While the colonial secretary held Cameron's spending in check, Germain spurred him in hope of greater activity. Germain was insistent that Cameron's superintendency be an itinerant one. The secretary had concluded that John Stuart's declining influence and inversely proportional expenditures stemmed in part from the fact that he no longer visited the tribes. Cameron therefore should spend each year traveling in his district.¹³

No young man, Alexander Cameron again and again postponed his departure from Pensacola. Even so he was not completely out of touch with the two principal tribes in his district. The story that he heard was a familiar one: the Choctaw vacillated, the Chickasaw stood firm. Opayamataha, the venerable Chickasaw leader, reported that his stribe was steadfast, that he had admonished the Choctaw, threatening war if they did not come around.¹⁴

Threats and admonitions notwithstanding, the Choctaw wavered. When asked for warriors to participate in raids against Spanish posts at Mobile and along the Mississippi, one Choctaw leader replied that killing Spaniards "was like extinguishing the sun." Indicative of the division within the tribe was the response by another that the Spanish were more like "Dogs than men I know nothing they have but Body lice. You who love them go and partake their Lice and Palmetto Matts with them.

¹² James Campbell to Cameron, June 18, 1780, *ibid.*, 226; Cameron to John Campbell, June 30, 1780, *ibid.*, 230; John Campbell to Cameron, July 1, 1780, *ibid.*, 228; Cameron to Clinton, July 18, 1780, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 159-60.

¹³ Cameron to Germain, July 18, 1780, CO5/81, 206; Germain to Cameron, April 5, 1780, *ibid.*, 105; same to John Campbell, April 4, 1780, CO5/597, pt. 2, 295-307.

¹⁴ Cameron to Germain, July 18, 1780, CO5/81, 206.

I prefer the company of an English [*sic*] dog to a Spanish King.”¹⁵

Farquhar Bethune, the Choctaw deputy, believed that the key to success was provisions: “Reason and Rhetoric will fall to the Ground unless supported by Strouds and Duffells. Liberality is alone with Indians true Eloquence without which Demosthenes & Cicero, or the more modern orators Burk and Barre might harrangue [*sic*] in vain.”¹⁶

Superintendent Cameron too saw the trade as a means of pressure but could get no aid in regulating it from General Campbell or Governor Chester. Of his disagreements with the general, Cameron complained:

If I have but a half dozen Indians to gratify with a few presents, I must apply to General Campbell for the few articles requisite for that purpose and I must confess to your Lordship [Germain] that it is rather disagreeable to me to be Soliciting for a few presents which I must reasonably Suppose ought to be under my immediate direction, for If I cannot be entrusted with a few Indian presents, I am not worthy the Charge His Majesty has been graciously pleased to commit to my care.¹⁷

Although there may have been reason for Alexander Cameron’s general complaints against Campbell, some were questionable. Looking for excuses to postpone his departure from Pensacola, Cameron expressed fear for his life. Did not Farquhar Bethune have a price on his head of a thousand dollars in Spanish gold? Alexander Cameron believed his own head would bring twice that. Again he proposed to John Campbell that a company of light horse be recruited and sent with him. Predictably General Campbell vetoed the idea. He could not perceive “how a Troop of Dragoons, could either enable you to,

¹⁵ Farquhar Bethune to Cameron, Aug. 27, 1780, CO5/82, 92; same to same, Sept. 1780, *ibid.*, 97.

¹⁶ Bethune to Cameron, Aug. 27, 1780, *ibid.*

¹⁷ Cameron to Germain, July 18, 1780, CO5/81, 206. General Campbell reported Indian expenses as of an “amazing amount,” in a letter to Germain, July 22, 1780, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 162.

or the want of it incapacitate you from fulfilling such Engagements as may be proper to enter into with the Indians.”¹⁸

If one could not see how Cameron might use a troop of light horse, the same conclusion could not be drawn for his counterpart in the Atlantic District. Brown was actually serving in a dual capacity as superintendent of the Atlantic District of the British Southern Indian Department and as lieutenant colonel of the East Florida Rangers. Since in the first he was subordinate to the same officer as in the second, he was not serving two masters. That both roles might be facilitated, he proposed moving inland to Augusta.¹⁹ There he would be close to the tribes and he could command the Loyalist garrison there. Both Clinton and Germain approved his move.

Other suggestions made by Brown did not meet such ready acceptance. As had Alexander Cameron he found the proposed budget inadequate. He too suggested an increase; he too was turned down. Germain explained that the budget was “formed on the plan of a Peace establishment, leaving it to the Commander in Chief of the King’s forces, or the General Officer Commanding in the District to make such addition on account of the Military Services the war may occasion you to undertake, as they shall judge necessary.”²⁰ Furthermore, commented the secretary, that the budgetary funds might be used to the greatest advantage, the Seminole Creeks had been placed under the jurisdiction of the governor of East Florida, whose annual budget included £1,000 for Indian presents. Here Germain was inviting an outburst from Patrick Tonyn, for that enterprising official already had funneled the Indian funds elsewhere.

In the summer of 1780 Thomas Brown moved to Augusta, set up his headquarters, established communications with the

¹⁸ Cameron to John Campbell, Sept. 18, 1780, CO5/82, 102; Campbell to Cameron, same date, *ibid.*, 105; Cameron to Campbell, Sept. 19, 1780, *ibid.*, 107; Cameron to Germain, Sept. 20, 1780, *ibid.*, 98; same to same, Sept. 22, 1780, *ibid.*, 90.

¹⁹ Germain to Brown, July 5, 1780, CO5/81, 171.

²⁰ Thomas Brown’s estimate for expenses, March 10, 1780, *ibid.*, 153; Germain to Brown, July 5, 1780, *ibid.*, 171.

tribes, and laid plans for conferences with the Creeks and Cherokee in the fall. In preparation for these gatherings he brought to Augusta large quantities of provisions that tempted the Patriots, who reasoned that a successful strike against Brown's post would spoil the conferences, gain precious supplies, boost badly sagging morale.

The Patriot strike by six hundred men under the command of Colonel Elijah Clarke came on September 14, 1780. Caught outside the post by the swift attack, Brown led his men in cutting through the Americans to take shelter in the town. Fifty Cherokee slipped through the lines on the next day, but so close was the siege from

that time no person could be sent out, nor did any get in till the 18th; every five or six hours a heavy discharge from the enemy's artillery, which did much damage to the buildings, etc. The greatest distress arose from being without water, every avenue which led to it being exposed to the fire of the Rebels. In other respects the situation was also disagreeable;—dead men and horses all about the yard—wounded men and prisoners taken the first day calling out continually for Doctor and Water, neither of which was it possible to procure for them.²¹

Colonel Brown and his men held out for four days before a rescue column arrived from the British post at Ninety-Six in the South Carolina upcountry. Units of both the garrison and the relief force then joined in pursuing the retreating Americans. The Patriot commander admitted that he was pressed so closely that "the Circumstances of the Times Suited me to Retreat from thence, and through much Difficulty Got through the Mountains to Nolechucky [*sic*] . . ."²²

The timely arrival of reinforcements saved post, superinten-

²¹ Charles Shaw to Germain, Sept. 18, 1780, *ibid.*, 318; James Wright to Germain, Sept. 18, 1780, *CGHS*, III, 316–17; *Royal Georgia Gazette*, Sept. 23, 1780, in CO5/82, 165; *Royal Gazette* (S.C.), Sept. 27, 1780, 2; William B. Stevens, *A History of Georgia* (Philadelphia, 1859), II, 248.

²² Elijah Clerk [*sic*] to General Sumpter [*sic*], Oct. 29, 1780, Thomas Sumter Papers, I, LC.

dent, and provisions.²³ The warriors who had served during the siege would be rewarded, for they had "fought like devils." Yet despite their efforts, Superintendent Brown sustained wounds in both legs.

Courageous fighting under the British flag by the Cherokee and Creeks was no surprise, but similar action by the Choctaw was startling. Yet late in 1780 they were doing just that. Driven by their need for supplies, a number of Choctaw warriors voluntarily began harassment of the Spanish garrison at Mobile. By Cameron's report, the Spanish would no longer "venture for water at Mobile but are obliged to cross the bay to the village on this [east] side for every drop they drink, for fear of the Indians."²⁴

Encouraged by their success, some one hundred and fifty Choctaw joined a band of provincials in an attempt to overrun the detail posted outside the stockade at Mobile village.²⁵ Since an assault upon entrenched forces was new to the Choctaw, it was no surprise when they fell back in confusion at the discharge of two four-pounders loaded with grapeshot. Rallying, the Choctaw advanced once again, only to be met by a Spanish sally which broke their lines and forced them into retreat. When the provincials refused further action, the Choctaw slipped back, burned several houses, and then retreated in the face of Spanish bayonets.

Upon their return to Pensacola, Alexander Cameron heaped congratulations upon them. But for the cowardice of the provincials, Cameron asserted, victory would have been theirs. To General Campbell he proposed that the natives be sent back with trustworthy whites. Campbell declined. Grateful though he was for their efforts, he believed that no good could be served

²³ Charles Shaw to Germain, Sept. 18, 1780, CO5/81, 318; James Wright to Germain, Sept. 22, 1780, *ibid.*, 320; Meeting of the Governor's Council, Sept. 18, 1780, CGHS, X, 126-27; Thomas Sumter to Jethro Sumner, Sept. 23, 1780, Draper Colls., Thomas Sumter Papers (Duke), VII, 81; *Royal Gazette* (S. C.), Sept. 27, 1780, 2.

²⁴ Cameron to Germain, Oct. 31, 1780, CO5/82, 111.

²⁵ *Ibid.*; and same to same, Nov. 30, 1780, *ibid.*, 117.

by another expedition. Thanking them for their services, General Campbell distributed a pound of ammunition to each warrior and dismissed them.²⁶ This niggardly action piqued the Choctaw, for they knew that powder was available. They would not respond so readily the next time they were called upon.

General John Campbell's practices were irritating not only to Alexander Cameron but also to others. What occurred in Pensacola late in 1780 bordered on insurrection. Out of fear that the Spanish shortly would return, many inhabitants of Pensacola and some officers of the garrison agreed that the natives should be kept nearby. Presenting their demands to the general, the petitioners threatened to send a spokesman to London with the report that "his conduct intimated to them that he meant to give up the Province."²⁷

Faced with these demands, troubled by reports of a coming attack by the Dons, General John Campbell changed his mind. Recalling the Choctaw, he also wrote Alexander McGillivray requesting Creek warriors. Send them at once, asked Campbell of McGillivray, "that it may be once more recorded in the Annals of Great Britain that Pensacola was again a second time preserved (within the space of twelve months) from falling a conquest to Spain by the Courage and Magnanimity of our Indian Friends."²⁸

Then to the dismay of Cameron, townspeople, and officers, Campbell cancelled all his requests upon receipt of word that a storm had scattered the Spanish fleet. The general's inconsistency was alienating natives and colonials as well.²⁹

While Alexander Cameron's charges were called upon for defensive actions from time to time in late 1780, the warriors of

²⁶ Cameron to Germain, Nov. 30, 1780, *ibid.*; James Campbell to Cameron, Nov. 7, 1780, *ibid.*, 134; Cameron to Campbell, Nov. 8, 1780, *ibid.*, 126.

²⁷ Cameron to James Campbell, Nov. 1780, *ibid.*; same to Germain, Nov. 30, 1780, *ibid.*, 117; same to same, Oct. 1780, *ibid.*, 111.

²⁸ John Campbell to Alexander McGillivray, Nov. 22, 1780, *ibid.*, 451; same to Brown, Nov. 15, 1780, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 109; James Campbell to McGillivray, Nov. 15, 1780, CO5/82, 450; John Campbell to the same, Nov. 22, 1780, *ibid.*, 451.

²⁹ Clinton to John Campbell, Oct. 21, 1780, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 193.

the Atlantic District were called out for offensive action. During that year the British pushed deep into the interior of South Carolina. At one point a partisan unit under Colonel Patrick Ferguson threatened the backcountry of both Carolinas. Angered by the behavior of Ferguson and his Loyalist militia, leaders in North Carolina and Virginia gathered men, moved swiftly south, and crushed the hated legion at King's Mountain. So decisive was their victory that General Cornwallis imagined himself threatened by those "wild and fierce inhabitants" of Kentucky. Consequently he instructed the Indian superintendent that the Cherokee should attack the frontier settlements. Then the deadly Patriot riflemen could not harass him or join the American army slowly gathering strength in North Carolina.

Since Thomas Brown had conferred already with the Raven of Chote (who was playing a double game), he believed that the Cherokee would act.³⁰ Time had eased the wounds of 1776, a British army was present in the South, and the superintendent had supplies for them. Perhaps they could enjoy the sweet taste of revenge without fear of the bitter aftertaste of punishment.

The Cherokee should have known better. Their plans became known to Joseph Martin, the Virginia agent who lived in their towns. Martin reported to the governor of Virginia that "the British agents had Succeeded in their negociations [*sic*] and the most of their Chiefs and Warriours [*sic*] of the old Towns had Determnd [*sic*] to Take a Decisive part . . ." against the Patriots.³¹

Since there was no time for a formally organized expedition, it was some of the same Patriots who had fought at King's Mountain along with some others who asserted that "if the enemy are not repell'd before they get leave to penetrate into the Country this winter, we must the ensuing Summer be sub-

³⁰ Brown to Cornwallis, Dec. 17, 1780, Clinton Papers, WLCL; Cornwallis to Clinton, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 225-26; Brown to Archibald McArthur, May 15, 1783, British Headquarters Papers, vol. 69, no. 7688.

³¹ Joseph Martin to Thomas Jefferson, Dec. 12, 1780, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 41.

jected to the depredations of a savage Enemy.”³² Late in 1780 Lieutenant Colonel John Sevier led three hundred North Carolina volunteers on a forced march into the Cherokee country. Successful in a skirmish on December 16, Sevier and his men paused at the Great Island of the French Broad. Another party coming south from the Virginia settlements would enhance their chances for victory. So short was the Sevier party on supplies that until the Virginians arrived they were foraging for “dry grapes, haws, walnuts, and hickory nuts.”³³

After the arrival of Colonel Arthur Campbell and four hundred men of Virginia, the combined forces advanced into the heart of the Cherokee country, taking even the beloved town of Chote without opposition. After razing Chote and other villages in the vicinity, the party set out for the Chickamauga towns. Upon their arrival there the fatigued North Carolinians went home. After the Virginians swept through the Chickamauga towns, Colonel Campbell threatened the entire Cherokee nation with a permanent occupation force if they did come to terms.³⁴

Although this punitive expedition of late 1780 did not match the strength of those of 1776, a number of towns were destroyed “in which were upwards of one thousand Houses, and not less than fifty thousand Bushels of Corn, and large quantities of other kinds of provisions, all of which, after taking sufficient subsistence for the army whilst in the Country, and on its return, were committed to flames, or otherwise destroyed.”³⁵

³² William Campbell to Maj. Edmiston, Dec. 17, 1780, Draper Colls., King's Mountain Papers (UNC), IX, 23.

³³ Arthur Campbell to Jefferson, Jan. 15, 1781, Palmer, *Calendar*, I, 434-37; John Sevier to Joseph Martin, Dec. 20, 1780, Draper Colls., King's Mountain Papers (UNC), XI, 91; James Sevier (ed.), “A Memoir of John Sevier,” *American Historical Magazine* 6 (1900), 40-45.

³⁴ Arthur Campbell to Jefferson, Jan. 15, 1781, Palmer, *Calendar*, I, 434-37; Talk from Sevier, Campbell, and Martin to the Chickamauga, Jan. 4, 1781, *ibid.*, 414-15; Arthur Campbell to Patrick Henry, *ibid.*, I, 317.

³⁵ Campbell to Jefferson, Jan. 15, 1781, Palmer, *Calendar*, I, 434-37; Jefferson to the President of Congress, Feb. 17, 1781, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, II, 351; same to Washington, Feb. 17, 1781, *ibid.*

Much to his surprise Colonel Campbell found in one chief's "Baggage, which he left behind in his fright, various manuscripts, Copies of Treaties, Letters, and other Archives of the nation, some of which shews the double game that people has been carrying on during the present war."³⁶ Killing twenty-nine and capturing seventeen Cherokee, the Patriots lost one man. Once again the frontiersmen had demonstrated their ability. It seemed too that the Cherokee never learned from past experience.

All in all the year 1780 was a successful one for the British Southern Indian Department. Promises long made were fulfilled by the Indians at last. From Georgia to West Florida bands of warriors entered His Majesty's service. Pensacola without question repelled the would-be Spanish conqueror because the Creeks came; Augusta was held with Indian assistance; only Mobile had not been saved but its Spanish occupants could not rest easily because of raiders. For the Americans, Indian affairs in the South were almost completely neglected. They were too busy with British armies. Even so, the frontiersmen managed a punitive raid into the Cherokee country. In the resiliency of the frontier settlers lay the key to a renewed Patriot offensive in the next year. Success for the Patriots and the Spanish in 1781 would leave the Southern Indians in a predicament by the end of that year.

³⁶ Campbell to Jefferson, Jan. 15, 1781, Palmer, *Calendar*, I, 434-37. Many of these papers, known as the "Archives of the Cherokee," are now deposited in PCC, no. 71, 141-233. The earliest is the King's Proclamation of 1763, the latest a letter from Edward Wilkinson to the Cherokee, July 5, 1778. Also included is the Great Warrior's certificate of membership in the Charleston St. Andrew's Society, dated Nov. 30, 1773. In connection with this unique collection of records, see John R. Alden, "The Eighteenth Century Cherokee Archives," *American Archivist* 5 (1942), 240-44.

VII. THE DECLINE OF BRITISH INFLUENCE



Invasion of the Cherokee country in December of 1780 again had left smoldering ashes in the places of lodges and storehouses. Even so the frontiersmen were not confident that the tribe was chastened. So pessimistic was Arthur Campbell, who had led the Virginians in late 1780, that he suggested a permanent garrison in the Cherokee country.¹ His despair was shared by another frontier leader who believed "the burning of their huts, and destruction of their corn, will I fear make the whole Nation Our irreconcilable Enemies, and force them for Sustenances to live altogether by depredation on our frontiers, or make an open Junction with our foes, as the loss they have sustained in Men is little or nothing."² Concern over Cherokee activity was not limited to frontier leaders. To General Nathanael Greene, the American commander in the South, it was essential that nothing interfere with his recruiting efforts.³ Greene's fifteen hundred

¹ Arthur Campbell to George Muter, Jan. 16, 1781, Palmer, *Calendar*, I, 437-39; Jefferson to Campbell, Feb. 17, 1781, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, II, 353; Samuel Huntingdon to Jefferson, Feb. 25, 1781, PCC, no. 15, 239.

² William Fleming to Jefferson, Feb. 19, 1781, Jefferson, *Papers*, IV, 407-408.

³ John Richard Alden, *The South in the American Revolution* (Baton Rouge, 1957), 251-52; Arthur Campbell to Jefferson, Feb. 12, 1781, Palmer, *Calendar*, I, 507. In connection with Greene's desperate need for men, see Ralph Izard to Richard H. Lee, Feb. 24, 1782, Richard H. Lee Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

poorly equipped men were not a match for the four thousand led by Charles, the Earl of Cornwallis. Evasive tactics by the Americans would keep the earl at bay for a while but eventually Greene had to have men. Especially desirable were those "mountain militia" famous for their services at King's Mountain.

When General Greene's request for levies was received on the frontier of southwest Virginia, the county lieutenant of Washington county, Arthur Campbell, was confident that his men would volunteer but he was troubled about the possibility of Indian activity in their absence. Perhaps, thought Campbell, a formal treaty with the Cherokee would achieve a period of peace. In his response to Greene, Campbell asked for the general's aid. Since Campbell could not negotiate a treaty, he "judged it most properly the business of Congress consequently of their Southern commander-in-chief, to direct a negotiation [*sic*]"⁴

Uncertain though he was of his actual prerogatives in Indian affairs, General Nathanael Greene was certain that the moment warranted action. Time could not be wasted waiting for instructions from Congress. The militia would be needed before the legislators could act. Commissioning William Christian, William Preston, Arthur Campbell, Joseph Martin, Robert Lanier, Evan Shelby, Joseph Williams, and John Sevier (four Virginians and four North Carolinians), the general instructed them to negotiate with the Cherokee and any other friendly tribes, settling boundaries, exchanging prisoners, and concluding peace. Greene was even so bold as to encourage the in-

⁴ Arthur Campbell to Jefferson, Jan. 27, 1781, Palmer, *Calendar*, I, 464-65; same to same, Feb. 2, 1781, *ibid.*, 484; same to same, Feb. 7, 1781, *ibid.*, 494; same to Greene, Feb. 8, 1781, Nathanael Greene Letterbook, LC. Indian pressure on the frontier might reduce the number of militia volunteers who would serve with the Continental army. See William Preston to Jefferson, April 13, 1781, Palmer, *Calendar*, II, 35; same to William Davies, July 26, 1781, *ibid.*, 255; same to Thomas Nelson, July 28, *ibid.*, 265; Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Huntingdon, May 28, 1781, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, II, 524-25; same to La Luzerne, April 12, 1781, Jefferson, *Papers*, V, 421.

vation of tribal representatives to visit Congress for official confirmation of any agreements reached.⁵

Had a group of resplendent forest diplomats indeed appeared at Congress in the summer of 1781 in response to the general's invitation, great would have been the surprise of all. So pressed was Greene that he did not inform Congress of his actions until September. He was certain that his apologies would be accepted, considering "the importance of stopping the ravages of two such powerful Nations of savages encouraged at a great expence by the Enemy, and in the critical situation things were in, in the Southern States, the measure will appear prudent and necessary, and tho' accomplished with some expence, meet the approbation of Congress."⁶

Despite Greene's efforts at cutting red tape, the Cherokee struck again before negotiations could begin. Frontier settlements in both North Carolina and Virginia absorbed raids by British-incited Cherokee. As usual the frontiersmen were equal to the challenge. John Sevier led one hundred and fifty men from the Old North State in an attack on the Cherokee Middle settlements. His swiftly moving detachment destroyed several towns, killed two or three dozen warriors, and confiscated two hundred horses. Joseph Martin too raised men, leading two hundred in scattering a hostile band.⁷

The actions of the Cherokee in harassing the Americans were matched if not exceeded by the Choctaw in their efforts

⁵ Nathanael Greene to Arthur Campbell, Feb. 26, 1781, PCC, no. 155, II, 263; same to William Christian, Arthur Campbell, and Joseph Martin of Virginia, and Robert Lanier, Evan Shelby, Joseph Williams, and John Sevier of North Carolina, Feb. 26, 1781, *ibid.*, II, 259-62; same to Washington, Feb. 28, 1781, *ibid.*, I, 590.

⁶ Greene to Congress, Sept. 1, 1781, *ibid.*, II, 255-56; Report of a committee to whom was referred General Greene's letter of September 1781 . . . , *ibid.*, no. 19, II, 470; JCC, XXI, 188; *ibid.*, 1089.

⁷ Arthur Campbell to George Muter, March 12, 1781, Palmer, *Calendar*, I, 569; same to Jefferson, March 28, 1781, Jefferson, *Papers*, V, 267; Joseph Martin to Jefferson, March 31, 1781, Palmer, *Calendar*, I, 613; same to Arthur Campbell, April 22, 1781, *ibid.*, II, 64; Campbell to Jefferson, April 25, 1781, *ibid.*, 72-73; North Carolina Senate Journal, June 23, 1781, NCCR, XVII, 803; North Carolina House Journal, June 25, 1781, *ibid.*, 808.

against the Spanish. Still confident that pressure on the Spanish at Mobile was worthwhile, bands of Choctaw lurked about that post almost constantly. Their eagerness rubbed off on General John Campbell, who ordered a second attempt against the village on the eastern side of Mobile Bay. Four hundred Choctaw led by Farquhar Bethune and John McIntosh joined a detachment of troops for the attempt.⁸ Taking position between the post and the bay, the Indians cut down a number of Dons as they attempted to reach their boats. But when a Spanish rally took the life of the British officer in charge, his successor elected to withdraw. Again the Choctaw had proved their mettle, although it was in a losing venture.

Upon their return to Pensacola, the disappointed Choctaw found General Campbell agitated over reports that Gálvez was underway once again. Openhanded toward the natives for the moment, Campbell provisioned the Choctaw and asked for the aid of the Creeks. Send as many warriors as will come, wrote the general to Alexander McGillivray, but be certain that each has his own weapon, "there not being one hundred Guns in all Pensacola and not many spare muskets by reason of the immense Number of the different Nations who received Presents since the arrival of the last supply."⁹

As the Indians might have expected and as Alexander Cameron could have predicted, General John Campbell shortly did a turnabout.¹⁰ Receiving word of coming reinforcements, Campbell cancelled his requests and suspended his largess. Although Campbell complimented McGillivray for his "Services and Zeal," he was not to bring any warriors down at the moment.

⁸ Cameron to Germain, Feb. 10, 1781, CO5/82, 130; same to James Campbell, Brigade Major, Jan. 27, 1781, *ibid.*, 135; James Campbell to Cameron, Jan. 30, 1781, *ibid.*, 141; John Campbell to Clinton, Jan. 5, 1781, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 233; same to same, Jan. 7, 1781, *ibid.*, 234; *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, Jan. 31, 1781, 2.

⁹ James Campbell to Alexander McGillivray, Jan. 12, 1781, CO5/82, 452; Charles Shaw to Germain, Feb. 14, 1781, *ibid.*, 166.

¹⁰ James Campbell to McGillivray, Feb. 1781, *ibid.*, 452; John Campbell to Thomas Brown, Feb. 18, 1781, *ibid.*, 453; Cameron to Germain, May 27, 1781, *ibid.*, 204.

Toward the Choctaw at Pensacola the general was again his usual self. One-half of the seven hundred warriors present were dismissed. For those who stayed, a few provisions and presents were doled out.

Hardly had General Campbell dismissed the Choctaw when, as in the proverbial tale, the wolf actually appeared. Gálvez was en route; reinforcements were not. A frantic John Campbell pled with Cameron for recall of the Choctaw, with McGillivray for Creek recruits. By now Campbell had cried "Wolf! Wolf!" too often. The Choctaw complained bitterly of the general's policies; they would do nothing. The response from the Creeks was the same; they were equally disgusted with the general's off-again, on-again practices.

When the Spanish fleet appeared off Pensacola in early March of 1781, Gálvez's army of four thousand men would be met by only fifteen hundred British soldiers and some four hundred Choctaw plus about one hundred Creeks who straggled in after the siege was underway. Sent to harass the Spanish while they constructed their lines, the warriors were pulled back as the Dons inched closer. On March 30 a Choctaw sally broke the Spanish lines at one point. When no regulars followed, the doughty Choctaw leader Frenchumastabie returned to the British lines in a fury. In his view every major effort against the Spanish since their arrival had been undertaken by the Indians, without support, without reward.¹¹

However much the British and the Indians hoped otherwise, time and numbers were with Bernardo de Gálvez. Reinforcements coming on April 20-21 boosted his army to seven thousand men, a figure more than treble that of the defenders, troops, Indians, and Negroes included. For seventeen days longer the British held out; then a lucky shot into a magazine

¹¹ Talk of Frenchumastabie, Great Medal Chief of the Choctaw, to Cameron, April 1, 1781, *ibid.*, 210; Caughey, *Gálvez*, chs. 11-12, *passim*; Osborn, "Campbell in West Florida," 338; *Royal Gazette* (S. C.), May 12, 1781, 2; *ibid.*, May 23, 1781, 2; Cecil Johnson, *British West Florida* (New Haven, 1943), 217; Deposition of Henry Smith, May 1781, CO5/597, pt. 2, 739-40.

destroyed the powder reserves. On May 8, 1781, General John Campbell capitulated his garrison and Pensacola.¹²

Campbell's surrender at Pensacola meant more than the loss of another British outpost. It signaled the end of effective functioning of the Southern Indian Department. After the fall of Charleston to the Patriots in 1775, John Stuart had transferred his headquarters to Pensacola. From there he had communicated with his charges throughout the interior. His successor Alexander Cameron had maintained his headquarters there as well although his superintendency was somewhat emasculated in form compared to that of Stuart. Without a Gulf coast base, Cameron would be forced to move to Georgia or East Florida if he intended carrying on his office.

As the Union Jack came down over Pensacola, Cameron, McGillivray, and other departmental officials took refuge in the Creek country. There Alexander Cameron rested briefly, intent on traveling east into Loyalist Georgia where he might join Thomas Brown at Augusta. By locating his headquarters there, Cameron could join with the Atlantic superintendent in a close cooperation of their two offices. It would not be impossible for the Choctaw and Creeks to visit him, especially since Superintendent Brown might aid in securing them safe passage through the Creek country.

It was then to the disappointment of Alexander Cameron, and indeed to the extreme dismay of Colonel Brown, that Augusta fell into American hands before 1781 was out. After the battle of Guilford Court House in March 1781, General Nathanael Greene had refused to be drawn into a pursuit of Cornwallis across the sand hills of North Carolina. Instead, he led the American army south into South Carolina. The appearance of Patriot troops heartened the weary militia, who now began pressing the upcountry posts held by the Loyalists. As a consequence Augusta came under attack in April, the Americans led

¹² Caughey, *Gálvez*, 208, 210, 211; *Royal Georgia Gazette*, July 5, 1781, 3.

by Elijah Clarke, who had tried before, and Micajah Williamson of South Carolina.¹³

Brown and his force grimly determined to hold on. In the second month of siege, additional Patriots under Andrew Pickens and the troops of Light Horse Harry Lee joined the lines around Augusta.¹⁴ Brown called for help, demanding warriors of the Cherokee and Creek nations, pleading for troops from the garrison at Ninety-Six. No assistance was forthcoming: Ninety-Six was under siege, the Cherokee were occupied with the negotiations sponsored by General Greene, and the Creeks were still sulking over their treatment at the hands of General Campbell. As Colonel Brown continued his stubborn resistance, bands of warriors tried coming in but were either turned back or arrived too late. By early June, Brown and his men could hold out no longer; on the sixth he surrendered.¹⁵

In his negotiations for surrender terms, Brown sought protection for the Indians within the post. As an officer in the provincial corps, Thomas Brown would be treated as a prisoner under the conventions of war. Fearing that the Indians might be abused if not allowed to accompany him, he requested "That the Indian families, now in garrison, shall accompany the King's troops to Savannah, where they will remain prisoners of war, until exchanged for an equal number of prisoners in the Creek or Cherokee nations."¹⁶

The superintendent's reason for concern was not unfounded. Andrew Pickens and the other American leaders would have dealt with the Indians summarily. To the relief of Thomas

¹³ Thomas Brown to Germain, Aug. 9, 1781, CO5/82, 252; Cameron to Germain, May 27, 1781, *ibid.*, 204; Coleman, *Revolution in Georgia*, 135.

¹⁴ Clyde A. Ferguson, "General Andrew Pickens" (Diss., Duke Univ., 1960), 209; William Pierce, Jr., Aid de Camp [*sic*] to General Greene, to Brig. Gen. Sumter, June 6, 1781, Sumter Papers, II, LC.

¹⁵ Thomas Brown to Germain, Aug. 9, 1781, CO5/82, 252; *Royal Gazette* (S. C.), May 30, 1781, 3.

¹⁶ Henry Lee, *Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States*, ed. Robert E. Lee (New York, 1870), 369.

Brown, General Greene intervened, foreseeing danger in any drumhead justice. Too, Greene knew that feelings ran high against Brown and the Indians in the surrounding countryside. Care had to be taken lest vengeful Patriots fall on them. Under the general's orders, therefore, Thomas Brown and his entourage were carefully escorted eastward toward Charleston by a circuitous route.¹⁷

It was now apparent that British control over the Southern Indians was fading rapidly. Mobile and Pensacola were gone, interior communications from the Indian country to the Atlantic coast were uncertain, and American forces were closing on Charleston and Savannah. General Nathanael Greene saw an opportunity for American progress in Indian diplomacy. Perhaps now his commissioners could pacify the Cherokee and the Chickasaw too.

Hopeful though Greene might be, his commissioners were worried. How could they hope for peace with the Cherokee when Americans daily settled on Indian lands in utter defiance of legality and prudence? One of those disturbed by the situation was William Christian.

People of all ranks appear to have a desire to encroach upon Indian lands; this will throw great obstacles in the way of a Treaty. They have been ill treated on the one Hand, and caressed on the other, so that I have very little hopes anything can be done with them. The only great Inducements the Indians can have for treating; are for us to do them Justice respecting their Land and to subsist their Families this Summer.¹⁸

¹⁷ J. Burnet, Aide de Camp to General Greene, to Andrew Pickens, June 7, 1781, Revolutionary War Collection, Duke Univ.; Andrew Pickens to Greene, June 7, 1781, Gibbes, *Documentary History*, III, 91-92; Thomas Brown to Germain, Aug. 9, 1781, CO5/82, 252.

¹⁸ Jefferson to Christian, April 17, 1781, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, II, 482; Christian to Jefferson, April 10, 1781, Palmer, *Calendar*, II, 24. Although Christian doubted the success of the negotiations, he invited Davy Campbell to serve the commissioners as secretary, thinking Campbell would "see more for[ygn] Policy, in a Heathen Senate, than ever he saw in any

At that moment, however, whatever Christian's fears, the Cherokee were war-weary. Illegal settlers or no, leaders from the tribe conferred with Joseph Martin in late April. They confessed that they had behaved as "Rougues" to the Americans in following the British. Would the Americans forgive them? The Cherokee promised adherence to any new treaty that was drawn up.¹⁹

Despite the requests from tribal leaders, the conference was postponed because of the actions of a few renegades. The alarmed frontier folk believed the "Creek Indians, Cherokee, Tories, & Co." were about to launch an attack. Several companies of militia mustered before the rumors were dispelled. Also contributing to the delay was the shortage of provisions.²⁰ William Christian, experienced in Indian affairs, would not allow the arrangements to proceed without adequate supplies. For the eight hundred men, women, and children he expected, Christian estimated the costs at £200,000. A large sum, admitted Colonel Christian, but "supposing it to be going out of the Common Road, may it not be supposed that Virginia, when she is advancing millions upon millions for the Continent, will advance this small sum, to be charged with the Rest, rather than suffer a Business of such exceeding Importance to fail."²¹ Christian begged the officials of his state for the funds. The money would have to come from them or not at all. The currency of North Carolina would not pass in that state; the funds advanced

other." See Christian to Campbell, March 13, 1781, Draper Colls., King's Mountain Papers (UNC), IX, 27.

¹⁹ A Talk delivered by Clanosee or the Horse Leach & Aucoo, Messengers sent by Oconostota and Some Other Chiefs of the Cherokee Nation on the 28th of April, 1781, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 43; Arthur Campbell to Robert Lanier, May 27, 1781, Revolutionary War Collection, Duke Univ.; same to William Davies, Aug. 26, 1782, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 271-72.

²⁰ Arthur Campbell to Jefferson, June 4, 1781, Palmer, *Calendar*, II, 143; Christian to Jefferson, July 5, 1781, *ibid.*, 199; Joseph Martin to Arthur Campbell, June 4, 1781, *ibid.*, 143; Arthur Campbell to Jefferson, June 15, 1781, Jefferson, *Papers*, VI, 94; same to Robert Lanier, May 27, 1781, Revolutionary War Collection, Duke Univ.

²¹ Christian to Jefferson, July 5, 1781, Palmer, *Calendar*, II, 199.

by General Greene (£150 in specie) were laughable. Much to William Christian's pleasure and relief, the Virginia Council of State issued him eight warrants for £25,000 each to cover the expenses of the treaty.²²

However much the Cherokee wanted a settlement, they did not attend the conference in a truckling mood. A chief known as the Tassel quickly drove his point home.²³ Land was the sole basis for contention. In his opinion the Patriots would rather seize land than keep agreements. The warriors were guilty, yes, but they fought in retaliation for Patriot abuses. Stop the seizure of our lands, suggested the Tassel, and bloodshed will cease!

William Christian's reply scarcely dealt with the issue raised by the Tassel. The burden of his remarks was that if the natives wanted peace the Indians had to deliver up their prisoners, drive the British agents from the Chickamauga towns, and confirm their agreements by sending a delegation to Congress.

Apparently the peace faction within the tribe was in control. Several chiefs volunteered to visit Richmond, others proposed a raid against the renegade Cherokee towns, and within four months most of the prisoners had been released.²⁴ Given the continuing clash of cultures and competition for land, there could be no permanent peace, but for the moment the war parties would not be active.

Whatever their promises to the Patriots, the Cherokee were reluctant to break their ties with the British. In the fall of 1781, while three chiefs led by the venerable Oconostota journeyed with Joseph Martin to Williamsburg, the Raven slipped swiftly south to Savannah. Assuring Thomas Brown of his tribe's loyalty, the chief explained their predicament.

The Rebels from Virginia attacked . . . in such numbers last fall there was no withstanding them, they dyed their hands

²² *Ibid.*; Journal of the Council, July 16, 1781, *JCSV*, II, 357.

²³ Journal of the Treaty of Long Island of Holston, July 1781, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 43-49.

²⁴ Joseph Martin to Arthur Campbell, Sept. 20, 1781, PCC, no. 78, VI, 59-60; Campbell to William Davies, Oct. 20, 1781, Palmer, *Calendar*, II, 559.

in the Blood of many of our Woman [*sic*] and Children, burnt
17 towns, destroyed all our provisions by which we & our
families were almost destroyed by famine this Spring.

* * * * *

Oconostota went to Virginia to make the Rebels believe the
Nation meant Peace, but it was only to save the Corn upon the
Ground & prevent our Towns being burnt when our Corn is
made we will attack them with as much spirit as ever.²⁵

Probably Superintendent Brown recognized these "good words" for what they were, the Raven's attempts at maintaining prestige and acquiring supplies. The Patriots could destroy provisions, but they could not replace them. The British had always been able to provide; that was the hope of the Raven. Thomas Brown put little faith in such promises and took no encouragement from a futile strike by some Cherokee against the South Carolina frontier in late December. American superiority at retaliation was only too clear. A mounted unit under Andrew Pickens penetrated the Cherokee country in response to the raids of late 1781.²⁶ When a party of Cherokee and some traders attempted to slip through the country to Savannah, Georgia militia under General John Twiggs intercepted it. Twenty Indians were killed, seven women and two children captured, and 199 horses, 15,000 pounds of deerskins, and 1,500 beaver pelts were seized.²⁷

Sympathetic though he might be with the difficulties of his charges, Thomas Brown himself had cause for woe. As he had warned Germain, the financial demands of his department ex-

²⁵ A Talk from the Cherokee Nation delivered by the Raven of Chota at Savannah, Sept. 1, 1781, CO5/82, 287.

²⁶ Clyde A. Ferguson, "Andrew Pickens—Partisan" (thesis, Duke Univ., 1957), 221; Benjamin J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution* (New York, 1860), II, 442; Lee, *Memoirs*, 526–28; Ramsay, *Revolution of South Carolina*, II, 273–75.

²⁷ Stevens, *History of Georgia*, II, 269; *RRG*, II, 288; John Twiggs to Nathanael Greene, Dec. 16, 1781, PCC, no. 155, II, 409–11; Nathan Brownson to Nathanael Greene, Dec. 15, 1781, *ibid.*, Greene to John Twiggs, Dec. 25, 1781, Nathanael Greene Papers, Duke Univ., Durham.

ceeded the funds allotted. Now Brown's personal finances were strained. He reported his problem to General Clinton.

From the various Orders I have received and the unavoidable expence attending their Execution, together with the charge of Officers, White men and Interpreters, purchases of Rum, Provisions, etc.,—Expresses, repair of Arms, and hire of Pack-horses, I have been from the absence of My Lord Cornwallis subject to many difficulties, not only ruinous to my own Credit, but that of the Department. I hope it will occur to Your Excellency, that accounts long in arrear are truly distressing to an Individual, in consequence of Orders he is obliged to execute.²⁸

Thomas Brown further suggested in his letter to Clinton and in another to Germain a departmental reconsolidation, now possible since Alexander Cameron had died in Savannah on December 27, 1781. Brown would serve without any increase in pay, he promised. Such an action would place at his disposal a total of 13,000 warriors by his reckoning: 3,000 Cherokee, 7,319 Creeks, 7,022 Choctaw, and 750 Chickasaw.²⁹ Surely this force of Indian gunmen could harass the frontier effectively and aid the army as well.

Lord George Germain was unmoved by Brown's logic. The colonial secretary had determined in 1779 that the department would be divided and divided it would remain. Cameron's successor would be John Graham, the former lieutenant governor of Georgia. Though Brown was disappointed, he did not question the appointment. Not so tolerant was Alexander Cameron's deputy, Farquhar Bethune. Piqued because he did not receive the post, Bethune predicted that Graham would be unsatisfactory as an Indian officer. After all, carped Bethune, did

²⁸ Thomas Brown to Clinton, Dec. 28, 1781, CO5/82, 283.

²⁹ *Ibid.*; *Royal Georgia Gazette*, Jan. 3, 1782, 2; Brown to Germain, April 6, 1782, CO5/82, 277; "A New Map of the Southern District of North America From accounts of Travellers and from the best authorities, &ca., &ca., compiled in 1781 for Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Brown, His Majesty's Superintendent of Indian Affairs," by Joseph Purcell, photocopy, Raleigh.

he know anything of the tribes, had he ever visited them? Bethune prophesied that Graham never would visit the towns, that he would be a "Burthen to Government."³⁰

There was no opportunity for fulfillment of Bethune's predictions. By the spring of 1782 American control over the interior of the South was so secure that communication with the Southern Indians by the British was impossible. General Anthony Wayne had come south to aid Nathanael Greene. While Greene's men held the British in Charleston, Wayne's troops drew the circle smaller and smaller around Savannah.³¹ Patrols watched constantly and carefully that no goods left for the Indian country, that no natives reached Savannah where Thomas Brown was in residence.

That the Americans controlled all the countryside was not known to any of the tribes, whose information was arriving in a fashion more garbled than usual. Unaware that British propaganda did not represent the truth, the Southern tribes attempted some communication with Brown at Savannah. As a result, a party of Creeks ventured into Georgia, determined to reach Savannah. So badly did they need supplies that the party drove more than a hundred packhorses before them. A canny American officer tricked them by pretending that he commanded a British patrol. To their great surprise the party soon found themselves not in Savannah addressing Thomas Brown but in the headquarters of General Anthony Wayne.³²

Among those captured was Joseph Cornell, the long-time interpreter among the Creeks. From him Wayne learned of a

³⁰ Farquhar Bethune to Germain, Jan. 28, 1782, CO5/82, 289; John Graham to Clinton, Dec. 15, 1781, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 364; Recommendation signed by Governor Wright and the members of the royal council supporting Graham's application, CRG, XII, 509-10; Alexander Leslie to Clinton, Feb. 1, 1782, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 392; Graham to Carleton, July 20, 1782, *ibid.*, III, 30; Clinton to Wright, March 18, 1782, *ibid.*, II, 424; same to Leslie, March 19, 1782, *ibid.*, 425-26; Benjamin Thompson to Germain, Jan. 15, 1782, HMC, *Stopford-Sackville Mss.*, II, 251-52.

³¹ Anthony Wayne to Nathanael Greene, April 1, 1782, Greene Papers, vol. 57, WLCL.

³² Wayne to Greene, Feb. 1, 1782, *ibid.*

band of Choctaw coming east also. An American patrol sent out soon picked up a forager who had moved ahead of the natives.³³ Convinced that the American officer (Major Joseph Habersham) was Colonel Thomas Brown, the Choctaw brave agreed that he would guide his tribesmen to an appointed rendezvous on February 4. Under close questioning by his chief the warrior must have revealed something that exposed Habersham's ruse. The Choctaw retreated across the Altamahaw River, where they awaited until a British vessel picked them up and took them into Savannah.³⁴

The Creeks in Wayne's custody, fearful that they would be executed, escaped. When the general's men recaptured a number of them, the Patriot leader assured them he intended them no harm. In explaining this to Cornell, General Wayne was blunt.

That the Americans do not wantonly seek a War with the Creeks, or any other Nation of Indians, or wish to sport with the lives of men, you remain a living witness; had War been our choice, you, with the twenty six Indians, Chiefs, and Warriors, after being convinced of your hostile intentions, would have experienced the Hatchet, in place of that kindness, & humanity with which you, and they were treated.³⁵

Warning Cornell and the Creeks to keep the peace, General Wayne then released them.

By late spring of 1782 Patriot control of Georgia was complete save for Savannah and its immediate environs. There was

³³ Examination of Joseph Cornell, Jan. 28, 1782, *ibid.*; John Habersham to Wayne, Feb. 8, 1782, Revolutionary War Collection, Duke Univ.

³⁴ Habersham to Wayne, Feb. 8, 1782, Revolutionary War Collection, Duke Univ.; Graham to Germain, Jan. 31, 1782, CRG Typescripts, XXXVIII, pt. 2, 568; Leslie to Clinton, Feb. 18, 1782, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, II, 400; James Wright to William Knox, Feb. 23, 1782, *CGHS*, III, 373.

³⁵ Wayne to Greene, Feb. 11, 1782, Greene Papers, vol. 54, WLCL; same to same, Feb. 28, 1782, *ibid.*; same to Joseph Cornell, Feb. 25, 1782, *ibid.*; John Martin to the Creeks, Jan. 11, 1782, William Harden (ed.), "Official Letters of Governor John Martin, 1782-1783," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 1 (1917), 281-335.

no passage in or out of Savannah: a party of Creeks failed to reach the city in March; the Choctaw who had gone in by boat in February could not return west; and in May Superintendent Brown was sent scurrying back into town when he attempted a thrust westward to meet an expected party led by Emistisiguo, the head warrior of the Upper Creeks.³⁶

When Emistisiguo and his warriors did near Savannah in late May, they attempted a penetration of the American lines. Successful in their initial attack, the gunmen were then thrown back by a Patriot rally. In the course of the engagement Emistisiguo fell; even Wayne recognized him as "our greatest enemy and principal warrior of the Creek Nations." Killed also were sixteen other warriors, two Loyalists, and five Americans.³⁷

The blood of Emistisiguo and his men had been spilled in vain. Less than three weeks after the battle, the British flag came down over Savannah. None of the Indians had had any way of knowing that early in March, Germain had ordered a holding action in America. Sir Henry Clinton's successor, Sir Guy Carleton, had instructions for the evacuation of Savannah.³⁸ From there the superintendents of the British Southern Indian Department would withdraw to East Florida, taking their Choctaw and Creek houseguests with them. From St. Augustine the natives might find safer passage homeward.³⁹

³⁶ Wayne to Greene, April 1, 1782, Greene Papers, vol. 57, WLCL; same to same, May 7, 1782, *ibid.*, vol. 60; *The Virginia Gazette, or, the American Advertiser*, June 29, 1782, 3; *ibid.*, July 27, 1782, 2; Greene to Rochambeau, May 30, 1782, Greene Papers, Duke Univ.; *Royal Gazette* (S. C.), June 5, 1782, 2; *Royal Georgia Gazette*, May 23, 1782, 3.

³⁷ Wayne to Greene, June 24, 1782, PCC, no. 155, II, 491-95; Brown to Leslie, July 1, 1782, North Carolina Letters from the Emmett Collections of the New York Public Library, Raleigh; Thomas Brown to Shelburne, Sept. 25, 1782, CO5/82, 343; *The Virginia Gazette, or, the American Advertiser*, Aug. 31, 1782, 2; *ibid.*, Sept. 14, 1782, 3; *Royal Gazette* (S. C.), July 3, 1782, 1; *ibid.*, July 6, 1782, 3.

³⁸ Germain to Clinton, Jan. 2, 1782, Germain Papers, Military Dispatches, 1775-1782 (Secret), WLCL; Cabinet Meeting, March 30, 1782, Fortescue, *Correspondence of George the Third*, V, 435.

³⁹ Wilbur H. Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida, 1774 to 1785, the Most Important Documents Pertaining Thereto Edited With an Accompanying*

For the Southern Indians and their British patrons, the last eighteen months of the war can be described best as a period of retrenchment and decline. The military successes of the Spanish drove the departmental officials away from the Gulf, across Georgia, and finally to Savannah. Confronted with Patriot fortune and their own misfortune, the British Indian superintendents began a period of marking time which would not end until Thomas Brown left St. Augustine to the returning Spanish. Brown spent his last year as superintendent preparing himself for emigration and persuading the natives against similar action. Make peace with the Spanish, Brown would advise. He would have been more prudent and the Indians more fortunate in the long run if his suggestion had been to make peace with the Americans. That would have been good advice indeed.

Narrative (Deland, Fla., 1929), I, 107, 111; *Royal Gazette* (S. C.), 3; *The Virginia Gazette, or, the American Advertiser*, Sept. 14, 1782, 1.

VIII. ENDS AND BEGINNINGS



When the British withdrew from Savannah and Charleston in 1782, the Southern Indians faced a dilemma. With great effort they could continue ties with the British in Florida. Or, with less effort but with loss of face, they might make peace with the Americans. Two tribes, the Cherokee, and the Chickasaw, chose the latter course. The Creeks stood with the British. Only the Choctaw wavered, looking for a favorable sign.

Indicative of the Cherokee intentions was their release of prisoners. Even the stubborn Chickamauga gathered captives in preparation for their release.¹ The Chickasaw, on the other hand, wrote the Patriots asking for parleys. Although at first they hedged about breaking all ties with the British, by the fall of 1782 they hesitated no longer. "The English put the Bloody Tomahawk into our hands, telling us that we should have no Goods if we did not Exert ourselves to the greatest point of Resentment against you, but now we find our mistake and Distresses. The English have done their utmost and left us in our adversity. We find them full of Deceit and Dissimulation"²

¹ Joseph Martin to Arthur Campbell, July 28, 1782, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 243; Campbell to William Davies, Aug. 5, 1782, *ibid.*, 250; *The Virginia Gazette*, or, *American Advertiser*, Aug. 31, 1782, 3.

² A Talk from us [Poymace Tauhaw, Mingo Homaw, Tuskau Pulasso, and Paymingo] to be delivered by Mr. Simon Burney to the Commanders of every different Station between this Nation and the falls of the Ohio

Despite these overtures, some Patriots doubted the possibility of peace. Especially in South Carolina and Georgia was there fear that no settlement could be reached until the last remnant of the Cherokee war faction was crushed. Consequently South Carolina planned a punitive expedition, asking support from the other Southern states for General Andrew Pickens and a force invading the Cherokee country. In response Georgia promised aid, North Carolina approved a thousand troops for the venture (provided no harm was done the friendly towns), but Virginia demurred. With her the Cherokee were keeping faith. She would, however, withhold supplies from the nation until the campaign was over.³

When Pickens reviewed his troops in mid-September, there were no North Carolinians and of course no Virginians. Only a hundred Georgians under his old comrade-in-arms

River, July 9, 1782, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 50; John Bowman to the Governor of Virginia, Aug. 30, 1782, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 277-78; Benjamin Logan to Benjamin Harrison, Aug. 30, 1782, "George Rogers Clark Papers, 1771-1781," ed. James A. James, *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library* (Springfield, 1912), VIII, 103-104; Donelson to Harrison, Sept. 1, 1782, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 284; Clark to Harrison, Oct. 18, 1782, *ibid.*, 346; same to the Great chiefs and Warriors of the Chickasaw, Sept. 10, 1782, *ibid.*, 298-300; Thomas P. Abernethy, *Western Lands and the American Revolution* (New York, 1937), 223, 247; Harrison to the Speaker of the House of Delegates, Dec. 7, 1782, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, III, 393; same to the Chiefs and Warriors of the Chickasaw Nation, Dec. 19, 1782, *ibid.*, 407-409; same to Clark, Dec. 19, 1782, *ibid.*, 406-407; Council held at the Chickasaw Nation, Oct. 25, 1782, *ibid.*, 356-58.

³ Harrison to William Davies, Aug. 8, 1782, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, III, 291; same to same, Aug. 14, 1782, *ibid.*, 295; John Mathews to Harrison, June 12, 1782, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 191; Alexander Martin to Brig. Gen. McDowell, July 23, 1782, *NCCR*, XVI, 697-98; Andrew Pickens to Elijah Clarke, Sept. 2, 1782, Draper Colls., Thomas Sumter Papers (Duke), I, 69; same to Governor Martin (Georgia), June 22, 1782, Pickens Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Harrison to Joseph Martin, Aug. 8, 1782, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, III, 291; same to same, Aug. 15, 1782, *ibid.*, same to John Mathews, Oct. 15, 1782, *ibid.*, 345-45; Arthur Campbell to William Davies, Aug. 26, 1782, *ibid.*, 271-72; Joseph Martin to Campbell, Sept. 18, 1782, enclosed in Campbell to Davies, Sept. 20, 1782, *ibid.*, III, 316-18; Harrison to Campbell, Aug. 15, 1782, Draper Colls., King's Mountain Papers (UNC), IX, 36.

Elijah Clarke had come to his banner.⁴ Undaunted, Pickens and Clarke led their men on a forced march into the Cherokee country. Despite their speed, the Patriots found the towns deserted. An angry Andrew Pickens sent word demanding that the chiefs come in for a parley. Pickens threatened destruction of towns and people if plunder, prisoners, and partisans were not surrendered and peace made.

In reply the chiefs implored Pickens to wait a while. Their people had been scattered into the mountains by the swift penetration of their country. General Pickens agreed to their request. Finally, on October 17, 1782, he stood before representatives of the Lower, Middle, and Chickamauga towns. His basic terms were the same as stated in his original message. In addition he demanded a tribal cession of all lands between the headwaters of the Savannah and Chattahoochee rivers to South Carolina. The chiefs promised compliance.⁵

While some of the Cherokee stood cowed before General Andrew Pickens, the Overhill faction begged North Carolina for a definition of boundaries.⁶ Almost daily plagued by encroaching frontiersmen, the natives hoped a boundary settlement would alleviate the problem. Since they put their case to the nearest American representative, who was Joseph Martin,

⁴ LeRoy Hammond to Captains Moore, Pope, and Butler, Aug. 1, 1782, Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93, no. 034286, National Archives; Levi Casey to James Dillard, Aug. 7, 1782, Draper Colls., King's Mountain Papers (UNC), Andrew Pickens to Captain Butler, Sept. 6, 1782, Gibbes, *Documentary History*, II, 220-21; John Martin to Pickens, Aug. 16, 1782, Harden, "Martin Letters," 320; Elijah Clarke to Martin, Nov. 3, 1782, Force Transcripts, Georgia Records, Indian Affairs, LC; Pickens to Martin, Oct. 26, 1782, *ibid.*; same to Greene, Sept. 7, 1782, Greene Papers, vol. 67, WLCL.

⁵ "A Message sent to the Middle Grounds . . .," Sept. 25, 1782, Force Transcripts, Georgia Records, LC; A Talk delivered by General Pickens to the Head Men of the Cherokee Nation, Oct. 17, 1782, *ibid.*; William Johnson, *Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathanael Greene . . .* (Charleston, S. C., 1822), II, 347-49; Joseph Martin to Arthur Campbell, July 22, 1782, Draper Colls., King's Mountain Papers (UNC), IX, 35.

⁶ A Talk to Colonel Joseph Martin by Old Tassel, Sept. 25, 1782, *NCCR*, XVI, 415-16; Harrison to Alexander Martin, Nov. 12, 1782, *ibid.*, 457-58.

the Virginia agent, their pleas at first went to Martin's superior, Governor Benjamin Harrison. In forwarding the Cherokee entreaties to Governor Alexander Martin of North Carolina, the Virginia chief executive offered a philosophical defense of Indian rights, a rarity indeed among the Patriots: "Indians have their rights and our Justice is called on to support them. Whilst we are nobly contending for liberty, will it not be an eternal blot on our National character if we deprive others of it who ought to be as free as ourselves."⁷

As one might expect, Governor Alexander Martin ignored Harrison's philosophizing. To be sure, he commented, peace was necessary on "some permanent Principles, that the cruelties and Horrors of Indian wars, intolerable among civilized nations may in future be prevented."⁸ Martin did promise his fellow executive that no military action would be taken against the Cherokee and that the matter of delineating the boundary would be presented to the legislature.

The idealism of Benjamin Harrison might have been sorely tested in late 1782 but for the foresight of William Christian and Joseph Martin. Deprived of food by crop failures and ammunition shortages, the Overhills lived off the largess of the Virginia agent. That the state executive might realize their plight, a delegation of chiefs prepared for a visit to the capital in late 1782. When they stopped at the Long Island of the Holston, Christian and Martin talked them out of going. Spare yourselves such an arduous winter journey, advised the two Patriots. A letter to the governor would inform him of their plight; if he could aid them, he would do so.⁹

Benjamin Harrison's counterpart in Georgia, John Martin, faced a similar problem. In response to an invitation issued by

⁷ Harrison to Martin, *ibid.*

⁸ Alexander Martin to Harrison, Nov. 21, 1782, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 376-77.

⁹ Christian to Harrison, Dec. 15, 1782, *ibid.*, 398; same to same, Dec. 16, 1782, *ibid.*, 397; same to Sampson Mathews, Dec. 30, 1782, *ibid.*, 406-407; Joseph Martin's Memorandum Book, Dec. 10, 1782, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 52.

General Anthony Wayne and Martin, numbers of Lower Creeks arrived at Augusta in September of 1782.¹⁰ To them it seemed certain that the governor would have supplies, so they were intent on visiting him en masse. Governor Martin had been warned of their intentions; his counter was to invite only a representative delegation to confer with him in Savannah. The party which came to the coast under the Tallassee King got their two weeks of free room and board. In return they promised their best efforts at converting the balance of the tribe to peace.

As the Tallassee King doubtless knew, his promises were empty. The Upper Creeks and some Lower Creeks, as well as the Choctaw, and even a small remnant of renegade Cherokee still pursued the impossible. In late 1782 they filed quietly through the forests of the Southeast, intent on reaching St. Augustine. By the first month of 1783, Thomas Brown and John Graham were inundated by more than two thousand warriors in the streets of St. Augustine.¹¹

¹⁰ Anthony Wayne to the Factor and several other chiefs of the Creek Nation, July 13, 1782, PCC, no. 152, XI, 595; John Martin to the Tallassee King & the Head Men and Warriors of the Upper and Lower Creek Nation, July 19, 1782, in Harden, "Martin Letters," 313; Patrick Carr to John Martin, Aug. 22, 1782, in William Harden (ed.), "Letters of Patrick Carr, Terror to British Loyalists, to Governors John Martin and Lyman Hall, 1782, and 1783," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 1 (1917), 337-41; Wayne to Greene, July 28, 1782, Greene Papers, Duke Univ.; John Martin to Daniel McMurphy, Oct. 4, 1782, Harden, "Martin Letters," 330; same to Richard Henderson, Oct. 7, 1782, *ibid.*, 331; McMurphy to Martin, Sept. 22, 1782, Creek Indians, Letters, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta; Weekly Provision Return, Oct.-Nov. 1782, Military Papers, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta; I, 61-62, Talk of the Tallassee King, Oct. 25, 1782, copy, Telamon Cuyler Collection, Univ. of Georgia, Athens.

¹¹ Thomas Brown to Shelburne, Sept. 25, 1782, CO5/82, 343; same to same, Sept. 28, 1782, *ibid.*, 411; same to Carleton, Oct. 9, 1782, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, III, 157; same to Townshend, Jan. 12, 1782, CO5/82, 347; Archibald Campbell to Carleton, July 22, 1782, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, III, 32; Brook Watson to Maurice Morgan, Sept. 9, 1782, *ibid.*, 112; Memorial of Thomas Brown (Eastern Division) & John Graham (Western Division), Superintendents of Indian Affairs of the Southern District, Nov. 26, 1782, *ibid.*, 237;

In addition to the Southern delegations there were trans-Ohio tribesmen—Mohawk, Seneca, Delaware, Shawnee, Mingo, and Tuscarora. These warriors were present as part of an effort at organizing a great confederation of tribes in opposition to the advancing Patriots. The tribal representatives made it clear to the British that they expected support in their endeavors.

Thomas Brown tried soothing words. The king was grateful for their past services. His children should not view the withdrawal as desertion but as a temporary action for furthering the war against France and Spain. Should the return of the British be delayed, suggested Brown, it would be best that the Indians cultivate peace with the Americans. By his smooth talk, promises of trade, distribution of presents, and entertainment in the form of firing cannon at the fortress, Superintendent Brown managed to send his charges homeward in good humor.¹²

After their next visit they would not leave in so happy a mood. By the summer of 1783 the superintendent had his final instructions; St. Augustine was being evacuated permanently. Brown should withdraw his officers from the tribes, ease the shock for the Indians, and ready himself for emigration.¹³ Many tribesmen were incredulous at the news.¹⁴ How could their long-time friends, their protectors against encroachment by settlers,

Graham to Carleton, Dec. 2, 1782, *ibid.*, 247; Tonym to Carleton, Dec. 23, 1782, *ibid.*, III, 277. With regard to Southern visitors among the Northern tribes, see John Johnson to Frederick Haldimand, Aug. 11, 1783, "Haldimand Papers," *Michigan Pioneer Collections*, XX (1892), 164; Minutes of a Council held at Lower Sandusky, Sept. 6, 1783, by Alexander McKeen, Deputy Agent of Indian Affairs, with Hurons, Delawares, Shawnee, Mingoes, Creeks, and Cherokee, *ibid.*, 176.

¹² Brown to Townshend, Jan. 12, 1783, CO5/82, 347; same to Carleton, Jan. 12, 1783, *Amer. Mss.*, III, 325; John Douglass to Carleton, Jan. 20, 1783, *ibid.*, 334; Graham to Carleton, Dec. 2, 1782, *ibid.*, 247; John Douglass to Lord North, July 5, 1783, CO5/82, 390; Archibald McArthur to Carleton, Jan. 9, 1783, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, III, 322.

¹³ Townshend to Brown, Feb. 14, 1783, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, 358; Brown to Carleton, April 28, 1783, *ibid.*, IV, 58–59; Samuel F. Bemis, *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution* (London, 1957), 246–47.

¹⁴ Brown to Carleton, April 28, 1783, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, IV, 58–59.

their brothers in war, desert them? One chief could not swallow it. He would not believe the "Virginia lie."

The impending withdrawal was particularly upsetting for the Creeks. Even as they learned the sad news, the Georgians pressed them for a land cession, demanding all the tribal lands east of the Oconee River as compensation for "the many injuries done that virtuous state. . . ." ¹⁵ Even Alexander McGillivray had been confident of British support in the case of such demands. Now what was his tribe to do?

These developments were also troubling to Thomas Brown. At first he feared retaliation in the form of attacks against the settlement in East Florida. ¹⁶ Then to his astonishment a number of Indians begged for places on the emigration vessels. "If the English mean to abandon the Land, we will accompany them—We cannot take a Virginian or Spaniard by the hand—We cannot look them in the face." ¹⁷ So determined seemed many that even the commandant of the St. Augustine garrison believed them. "The minds of these people appear as much agitated as those of the unhappy Loyalists on the eve of a third evacuation; and however chimerical it may appear to us, they have very seriously proposed to abandon their country and accompany us, having made all the world their enemies by their attachment to us." ¹⁸

To other Southern Indians, however, the path of expediency beckoned. The Chickasaw, for example, had sent peace overtures to the Virginians in 1782. Apropos of this Governor Ben-

¹⁵ Alexander McGillivray to Brown, April 10, 1783, CO5/82, 374; Brown to Townshend, Jan. 12, 1783, *ibid.*, 347; William McIntosh to Thomas Brown, April 1783, *ibid.*, 378.

¹⁶ This rumor was circulated by the Spanish; see Antonio Claraco y Sanz to Luis de Unzaga, May 19, 1783, in Joseph B. Lockey (ed.), *East Florida, 1783–1785. A File of Documents Assembled, and Many of them Translated* (Berkeley, 1949), 111–12.

¹⁷ Substance of an Indian Talk delivered to Tonym, McArthur, and Brown, May 15, 1783, in *ibid.*, 108–109; Claraco y Sanz to Unzaga, May 19, 1783, *ibid.*, 111–12; Bernardo del Campo to Conde Floridablanca, Aug. 9, 1783, *ibid.*, 138–39.

¹⁸ McArthur to Carleton, May 19, 1783, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, IV, 88–89.

jamin Harrison opened a correspondence with John Donelson, a leader at the Cumberland settlement, Joseph Martin, and Governor Alexander Martin of North Carolina.¹⁹

Joseph Martin and Donelson (who was particularly interested in a Chickasaw treaty) responded affirmatively, but then heard nothing from Harrison. They had no way of knowing that the North Carolina legislature failed to meet that fall, leaving Alexander Martin powerless, nor could they know that Harrison continued with his plans for the proposed treaties without keeping them posted.²⁰ Late in 1782, John Donelson journeyed eastward for a conference with Joseph Martin. What was going on, asked the frontiersman.

Joseph Martin had heard nothing from Governor Harrison either, but on a recent visit in the Cherokee country he had learned their mood inclined them toward inclusion in any general peace agreement.²¹ Martin's fear was that the delegation returning from St. Augustine might influence the tribe negatively. Anxious for action, Martin and Donelson sent a messenger north for a conference with the governor of Virginia.

No one could have been more surprised at the arrival of John Reid in Richmond than Governor Harrison. What had happened to the commissions and covering instructions which he had sent out in January? Giving his saddle-weary visitor no time for rest, the governor issued duplicate commissions and instructions, then hurried Reid back west. It was Reid's turn for surprise when he encountered John Donelson at New London. That impatient frontiersman had come north seeking explanations for himself, since Reid had not returned soon enough

¹⁹ Benjamin Harrison to Donelson, Oct. 15, 1782, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, III, 343; same to Joseph Martin, Oct. 15, 1782, *ibid.*, 344; same to the Speaker of the House of Delegates, Oct. 21, *ibid.*, 353; same to Alexander Martin, Oct. 22, 1782, *ibid.*, 354-55.

²⁰ William H. Masterson, *William Blount* (Baton Rouge, 1954), 64.

²¹ Talk delivered to Joseph Martin by the Rising Fawn, Jan. 25, 1783, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 420-21; Old Tassel to the Governor of Virginia, Jan. 25, 1783, *ibid.*, Martin to Harrison, Feb. 3, 1783, *ibid.*, 426-27; Harrison to Martin, Jan. 8, 1783, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, III, 423; same to same, Jan. 25, 1783, *ibid.*, 436-37.

to please him. Together the two men journeyed to Martin's residence at the Long Island of the Holston. From there Reid went to Kentucky with Harrison's instructions for Isaac Shelby.²²

After Reid's departure, Joseph Martin and John Donelson rode east into North Carolina. Martin's public business was with that state's officials about encroachment on Indian lands; the Cherokee had complained for months about almost daily trespasses by settlers. Martin hoped his pleas would move the assembly to remedy the situation.²³

At Hillsborough, North Carolina, Martin and Donelson found the state assembly racked with land fever; if not already infected, in time, they, too, suffered the pangs of the virulency. They were persuaded by William Blount to represent his combine in negotiating with the Cherokee for the land lying just north of the great bend of the Tennessee River.²⁴

Joseph Martin did manage to lay the grievances of the Cherokee before the assembly. Unfortunately for the tribe, the North Carolinians assumed the attitude that by their support of the British, the tribe had forfeited all rights. All the tribal

²² Martin to Harrison, Feb. 3, 1783, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 426-27; Donelson to Harrison, Feb. 2, 1783, *ibid.*, 427; Harrison to Martin, March 6, 1783, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 60; Harrison to Martin, Donelson, and Shelby, Jan. 11, 1783, McIlwaine, *Official Letters*, III, 425; same to the Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Creek Nations or Tribes of Indian, Jan. 13, 1783, *ibid.*, 430; same to Martin, March 6, 1783, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 60. Later Harrison learned that the wagoners to whom he had entrusted the commissions and goods, finding themselves short on expense money, left the wagon with a frontiersman and returned to Richmond. See Harrison to Clark, April 9, 1783, Clark, "Papers," XIX, 223; James Dysart to Joseph Martin, March 15, 1783, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 59; John Reid to Harrison, Feb. 22, 1784, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 562-64; Martin to Harrison, April 14, 1783, *ibid.*, 468-69.

²³ Harrison to Martin, May 20, 1783, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 61; Talk from Governor Alexander Martin to the Cherokee, May 25, 1783, *NCCR*, XVI, 810; same to same, Aug. 1783, *ibid.*, 855; William Blount to Donelson, May 17, 1783, in *The Papers of John Gray Blount*, ed. Alice Barnwell Keith (Raleigh, 1952), I, 57-58; Donelson to Blount, Sept. 24, 1783, *ibid.*, 111-12; Masterson, *Blount*, 70 ff.

²⁴ Masterson, *Blount*, 68-70, 72.

land could be declared forfeit, but of course the beneficent legislators would not press their claims that far. If the Cherokee would accept the French Broad River as their temporary boundary with the state, and ultimately withdraw into a reservation bounded by the Tennessee, Holston, and French Broad, then all would be well. The governor would order the observance of the boundary and fine those who trespassed. As a further effort at control, the governor would attempt the licensing of all traders. Last among the legislative actions on Cherokee affairs was the appointment of Joseph Martin as state agent for the Cherokee, a post he had held for Virginia until the state boundary survey put his residence in North Carolina.²⁵ He had in fact been serving both states for some months. This position would of course serve him well in his role as representative of the speculators.

After his return with John Donelson across the mountains, Martin joined Donelson in arranging parleys with the Cherokee. In July they met with the Chickamauga Cherokee, arranged for peace with that portion of the tribe, and struck a bargain for the land lying north of the great bend of the Tennessee River. The price agreed upon was £1,000 in goods. Thus the two combined their roles as peace commissioners and speculators. Doubtless the latter consideration was preponderant in their negotiations.²⁶

²⁵ Alexander Martin to the Cherokee, May 25, 1783, *NCCR*, XIV, 810; *Laws . . . relating to Indians and Indian Affairs, from 1633 to 1831 . . .* (Washington, D. C., 1832), 170-71. In connection with Joseph Martin's appointment see Martin to Harrison, April 14, 1783, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 468-69; Harrison to Martin, May 20, 1783, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 61.

²⁶ "At a Treaty held July 9, 1783, at the Long Island on the Holston, with the Chickamauga Indians agreeable to Governor Harrison's Instructions," Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 55; Donelson to Blount, Sept. 24, 1783, *Blount Papers*, ed. Keith, I, 111-12; Joseph Martin to Harrison, Feb. 16, 1784, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 560-61; same to same, July 20, 1783, Executive Papers (EP 32), Virginia State Library, Richmond; Donelson to Harrison, Dec. 16, 1783, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 548; Martin to Harrison, Dec. 16, 1783, *ibid.*; Donelson to Harrison, March 3, 1784, *ibid.*, 567; List of goods distributed at a Treaty held July 9, 1783, at the Long Island of Hol-

The speculative virus and its symptoms were by no means restricted to victims in North Carolina or the Tennessee country. Georgians too had the disease, sharing the same attitude about victors and spoils as the North Carolinians. The Creeks and the Cherokee should grant "a cession of land as a consideration or attonement [*sic*] for the many injuries [done Georgia]; . . . and to negotiate [*sic*] such other matters, as may be consistent with the safety and interest of all parties."²⁷ The Georgians had reason to anticipate the cooperation of the tribes, since some stolen property had been returned voluntarily by the Creeks and the Cherokee.

The hopes for an early and easy cession from the tribes were soon diminished.²⁸ The first six months of 1783 had witnessed the emergence of Alexander McGillivray as the leader of the Creek confederation. While there was hope of British support, he held that out. When the British appeared certain to leave, he sought and arranged a *mariage de convenance* for the tribe with the Spanish. Consequently when messengers bearing invitations to the parley with Georgia entered the Creek towns, they were ordered out. Even though the Georgians did claim cession of Cherokee rights by virtue of a conference in May, the meeting had been with some Lower Town chiefs only. The entire tribe had not consented to cede those lands between the Oconee and Tugaloo rivers which the state wanted.

Equally unsatisfactory progress was being made by Virginia in negotiations with the Southern tribes.²⁹ Delays caused by ston, with the Chiccamaga Indians agreeable to Governor Harrison's Instructions, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 55; Robert S. Cotterill, "The Virginia-Chickasaw Treaty of 1783," *Journal of Southern History* 8 (1942), 482-96; William Blount to John Gray Blount, June 20, 1783, *Blount Papers*, ed. Keith, I, 87; same to same, Aug. 21, 1783, *ibid.*, 86-87.

²⁷ RRG, II, 412, 420-21, 483; *ibid.*, III, 214; *The Gazette of the State of Georgia*, Feb. 6, 1783, 2.

²⁸ *The Gazette of the State of Georgia*, Feb. 13, 1783, 3; RRG, II, 423; *ibid.*, 503; Thomas Brown to Thomas Townshend, June 1, 1783, CO5/82, 367.

²⁹ John Reid to Harrison, Feb. 22, 1784, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 562-64; Isaac Shelby to James Robertson, May 3, 1783, Draper Colls., King's Mountain Papers (UNC), XI, 46.

misfortune, poor communications, and bad weather had thrown the hoped-for parleys with the Chickasaw and Cherokee far behind. Indeed, the Chickasaw had begun to despair. More than a year had passed since their original overture to the Americans. Consequently they wrote again in July of 1783.³⁰ Their answer in effect came with the arrival soon thereafter of the road-weary John Reid.³¹ Since early in the year he had been to Richmond, back southwest to the Long Island of the Holston, and thence through the Cumberland Gap to Kentucky. After conferring with Isaac Shelby he had gone on to the French Lick, secured approval for holding the parley there, and finally reached the Chickasaw villages in August. Happily he brought the expected answer from the Virginians to the Chickasaw that a peace conference would be held.

If the long delay had made the Chickasaw despondent, it had made Shelby suspicious, John Donelson impatient and ready to resign. When word did come that Reid had set a date and place, the commissioners even then were displeased. How could supplies be gathered at such an isolated place in so short a time? The tone of Isaac Shelby, who feared that the gathering would be a hearing for land speculators, was blunt: "you are much blamed for your Delays, and if an Enquiry is made into the Commissioner's conduct, I wish attempts may be made to saddle you with the blame of procrastinating the business to this late period."³²

³⁰ Talk from the Chiefs of the Chickasaw to his Excellency the President of the Honorable Congress of the United American States, July 28, 1783, PCC, no. 78, XXIV, 445-49. In the interim the Chickasaw had received friendly overtures from the Spanish but they were urged by the former British commissary, James Colbert, to side with the Americans. See James Colbert to the Governor of Virginia, July 25, 1783, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 513-14.

³¹ Reid to Isaac Shelby, Aug. 2, 1783, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 519-20; same to Harrison, Feb. 22, 1784, *ibid.*, 562-64.

³² Martin to Harrison, Sept. 27, 1783, *ibid.*, 432-33; Shelby to Reid, Sept., 1783, *ibid.*, 533; Harrison to Martin, Aug. 21, 1783, Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 63; Shelby to Harrison, Dec. 1, 1783, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 544-45.

In the meantime, John Reid returned to French Lick. As predicted, he found great difficulty gathering supplies. During late October numbers of Chickasaw arrived; by the first week in November Joseph Martin and John Donelson came too. It was Donelson who welcomed the Chickasaw on behalf of the governor of Virginia, praising them for their peace overture. A tribal spokesman known as the Red King returned the salutations, then laid down his complaint. As usual land was the issue. Recently white men had asked permission to hunt on tribal lands; to their dismay the Chickasaw discovered they were not hunters at all but land speculators spying out choice sites. Upon the agreement that peace would be maintained and a boundary surveyed, the meeting was adjourned. Neither party could claim any great decision reached or victory achieved but no longer did an official state of war exist between the Chickasaw and Virginia.³³

In these Chickasaw negotiations the Americans dealt with spokesmen for the entire tribe. Such was not possible in their dealings with the two major Southern tribes. Factionalism so prevailed that treaties meant little. Georgia for example had persuaded a delegation of Lower Creeks that they should cede certain lands to the state, but this did not represent the wishes of the majority of the tribe.³⁴ Treaties such as this one and the Augusta treaty with the Lower Cherokee would provide an undesirable legacy for the new republic. Indian problems left unsolved during the war would be an additional burden for the new nation.

³³ Reid to Harrison, Feb. 22, 1784, Palmer, *Calendar*, III, 652-64; Donelson and Martin to Harrison, Dec. 16, 1783, *ibid.*, 548; "At a Treaty Began & held at the French Lick on Cumberland River the 5th Day of November of 1783 with the Chickasaws Nation of Indians . . .," Draper Colls., Tennessee Papers (UNC), I, 55, 65 ff.; Record of goods distributed, Nov. 7, 1783, *ibid.* Although there was no consideration of boundary agreements, the Chickasaw stated their claims to all the territory east of the Tennessee River which was drained by that stream from its confluence with the Ohio to the mouth of the Duck River and up that stream until the Cumberland watershed was reached.

³⁴ *RRG*, II, 544-45.

While the Americans expanded their list of conferences with the Southern tribes in 1783, the British slowly dismantled the imperial machinery that had been the British Southern Indian Department. Early in the summer the majority of the resident agents, interpreters, and traders departed their posts for St. Augustine.³⁵ Their escorts from the tribes were warmly received by Thomas Brown, who had spent much of his time dissuading those who had proposed emigration and cajoling those who damned the British for their sell-out. Now he continued to soothe his visitors by bestowing gifts upon them. Since the natives now appeared less incredulous, Brown hoped that the British withdrawal could be effected without attempts by any tribesmen to join the refugees. That the change-over to Spanish control might be smooth, Brown planned on remaining in East Florida until the formal cession.³⁶

Thomas Brown's advice for the future was that the Southern Indians swallow their pride and seek an understanding with the Spanish. To Alexander McGillivray he suggested that the Creeks "enter into a negociation [*sic*] with the Spanish Governor of Pensacola (who is jealous in the extreme of the encroachments of the Americans) for obtaining a supply of such arms and ammunition as would enable them to defend their territories."³⁷ McGillivray, the recently elected "King and Head Warrior of all the [Creek] Nation," conferred with the Spanish

³⁵ Some of the former officials, such as James Colbert, John McDonald, and Alexander McGillivray, chose to remain with the tribes. Any who wished to depart were promised military grants in other parts of the king's dominions. See Carleton to Brown, Aug. 22, 1783, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, IV, 291. For the story of McGillivray's rise to leadership, see James H. O'Donnell, "Alexander McGillivray: Training for Leadership, 1777-1783," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 49 (1965), 172-86.

³⁶ Archibald McArthur to Carleton, July 5, 1783, HMC, *Amer. Mss.*, IV, 203; same to same, June 16, 1783, *ibid.*, 158; same to same, July 19, 1783, *ibid.*, 233; Thomas Brown to Lord North, July 30, 1783, CO5/83, 392; same to Carleton, Sept. 12, 1783, CO5/82, 422; McArthur to Brown, Oct. 3, 1783, *ibid.*, 409.

³⁷ McGillivray to Brown, Aug. 30, 1783, CO5/82, 405; Brown to North, Oct. 24, 1783, *ibid.*, 403.

governor at Pensacola, Arturo O'Neill, in September.³⁸ In exchange for a Spanish-supported trade, the Creeks would offer their loyalty and support, McGillivray promising "his services to enlist the friendship of the different towns his neighbors."³⁹ For the moment content in seeking Spanish backing, McGillivray would later lead the tribe in playing off Spain against the United States in hope of benefiting the nation.

Without question 1783 was a year of both ends and beginnings for the Southern Indians. It was the end of the British Southern Indian Department, a short-lived but influential and, to the Southern tribesmen, essential organ of the British government in America. Weakened by the war, the department ceased to function after British withdrawal was agreed upon. In relations with the Americans the year opened a new chapter for the Southern tribes. No longer protected, even in part, the natives would be regarded as defeated enemies who should unhesitatingly turn over their lands to their victorious American neighbors.⁴⁰ This attitude, so evident in the several treaties of 1783, became the operational premise for federal Indian relations in the next several decades.

³⁸ Brown to North, *ibid.*, Arturo O'Neill to Josef de Ezpeleta, Oct. 19, 1783, in John W. Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks* (Norman, 1938), 62-63.

³⁹ O'Neill to Ezpeleta, Caughey, *McGillivray*, 62-63.

⁴⁰ Joseph Martin to Alexander Martin, Jan. 11, 1784, *NCCR*, XVI, 924-25; same to same, Jan. 25, 1784, *ibid.*, 11-12; Alexander Martin to Joseph Martin, Feb. 11, 1784, *ibid.*, 15-16.

EPILOGUE



Historians are somewhat like coroners: one carries out a post mortem on a corpse and the other performs a similar operation on the past. Even as the coroner seeks the causes of events, so does the historian. Their findings often list many causes. With the historian every occurrence deemed significant will be examined and re-examined from numerous points of view by several generations of scholars. Each investigator tries to contribute a bit here and a bit there, all claiming discoveries that need consideration when one attempts to view the whole. Such is the case with the present study. The author puts forward no bold assertions that the events here described fundamentally altered the course of the War for American Independence. For that matter, what single sequence of events did? The proper approach for an assessment of this particular story is from the point of view of the men of the time.

In 1775 could the officials on either side assume what might be the conduct of the Indians? Indeed not. The Indians were too numerous and they lived too close to the colonies to make such a decision wise. From the beginning to the end of the war, there was never a time when either side could afford to ignore the tribesmen. Both British and Americans sought a practical approach to the problem. The British developed a policy aimed at keeping the Indians out of the war until they could act with

troops. Patriot endeavors, on the other hand, were directed toward winning enough influence with the natives to keep them divided. The Americans were hopeful that neutrality would keep the tribes quiet.

Whatever else may be said, the attempts of both parties increased the burdens of war for each. No accurate figures can be had, but some approximations are possible. Between 1775 and 1783 the British spent some £250,000 sterling on Indian affairs in the South. The peak year was 1778, when nearly £80,000 was disbursed. During the same period, Patriot expenditures were large also, but depreciated currency makes comparison difficult. One example would be South Carolina's spending of £2,000,000 currency on Indians affairs in the last three months of 1776. Every expedition, every conference increased the expenses.

Considered along with the monetary expenditures must be the number of men engaged in the business of Indian affairs. Within the already established British department there were more than twenty-five officials. When the moment demanded it, the Parliament, the colonial secretary, the commanding general in North America, and the army officers in the areas near the Indian country gave attention to matters concerning the natives. Americans involved in the business of reckoning with the tribes included the five Continental commissioners for the Southern department, the committees appointed by the assemblies of the several states, the assemblies themselves, military officers, state and Continental leaders, the commander-in-chief, and the Continental Congress. At times there were hundreds and even thousands of troops committed to the protection of the frontier or to punishing the warriors for deeds already committed. In 1776 the expeditions against the Cherokee called up some six thousand men. Throughout the remainder of the war raids or threats of raids kept a part of the frontier militia from leaving its home district. General Nathanael Greene, for example, found his calls for troops only partly answered because of the needs of frontier defense in early 1781.

In the game of forest diplomacy during the war years, nei-



Map 3. White Expansion Threatens the Southern Tribes, 1770-1783. Map by Larry Hirst based on a sketch by J.H.O. Basic sources of information for this map are Herman R. Friis, *A Series of Population Maps of the Colonies and the United States, 1625-1790* (American Geographical Society, Mimeographed Publications 3 [New York, 1940]), and Louis De Vorsey, Jr., *The Indian Boundary in the Southern Colonies*.

ther the British nor the Americans could claim total victory. As a result of a combination of endeavor and good luck, the Patriots did not have to face an attack by the combined forces of the Southern Indians. This was no mean achievement. The labors of George Galphin and his associates and the vacillation of the Indians had something to do with this, but most significant was the effect of the Cherokee War. Refugee Cherokee told their story in the lodges of the Creeks, and from there it spread to all the Southern tribes. The Continental commissioners

found the narration of the events of that episode useful propaganda. Even John Stuart, over-sanguine though he was about the dependability of the Indians, readily admitted that the punishment meted out to the Cherokee in 1776 had frightened the other tribes in the South. None of them was eager to invite similar treatment. The course of the war in the South might have been different had not the warriors been intimidated by the Patriot success against a major tribal power.

British accomplishments with the Indians fell short of the great expectations held at the beginning of the war. Despite repeated assurances from the Indians of their undying loyalty and their willingness to act in the king's cause, despite expenditures and assiduous labor by the officials of the British Indian Department, the natives never rendered the service expected of them. The only time that the warriors made a substantial contribution came in 1780 when the Creeks and Choctaw aided in the defense of Pensacola against the Spanish. On that occasion they served well. How great their contribution might have been if the British had met with success below the Chesapeake early in the war is unanswerable.

To this point the discussion has been concerned with matters from the point of view of the white man. What of the Indian? What did he stand to gain or lose? At the beginning of the war the Southern Indians looked to the king, as represented by Stuart and his deputies, as their protector. He showered them with presents, supplied the trade, and protected their lands against the encroachment, or at least the too-rapid expansion, of the colonials. When the rebellious provincials began to court them, the natives were flattered. Once again two parties (and even three where Spanish influence was exercised) were vying for the loyalty of the tribesmen. Perhaps this situation would prove of advantage. The "good words" of the Patriots so impressed some tribesmen that they listened, ignoring the fact that all the while the greedy frontiersmen (some of whom would have welcomed a war to exterminate the Indians) were pushing closer.

A few gifts, some fair words, and too much rum were all that came the Indians' way. When the war was over the British were gone. Now there was no one to help resist the westward push of the Americans. What the tribes had, the white men coveted, and have it they would, sooner or later. The Spanish were still along the Gulf shore, but they could do nothing more than encourage the warriors to hold back the settlers by providing guns and ammunition. No combination of Indian and white power had ever seemed potent enough to stop the westward push of the British Americans. The American Indian would resist again and again, but however courageous his endeavor, he was never to overcome his adversaries and retain his birthright. In the play within the play that is American history, the Indian remains a tragic figure.

ABBREVIATIONS

- CGHS*—*Collections of the Georgia Historical Society*, Savannah
CO₅—British Public Record Office, Colonial Office, Series 5, London
CRG—Candler (ed.), *Colonial Records of Georgia*, Atlanta
CRG Typescripts—Colonial Records of Georgia, Typescripts, Savannah
CSCHS—*Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society*, Charleston
ETHS Publications—East Tennessee Historical Society *Publications*
HMC, Amer. Mss.—Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on American Manuscripts*, London
HMC, Dartmouth Mss.—Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Manuscripts of the Earl of Dartmouth*, London
HMC, Stopford-Sackville Mss.—Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Manuscripts of Mrs. Stopford-Sackville*, London
JCC—*Journals of the Continental Congress*, Washington, D. C.
JCSV—McIlwaine (ed.), *Journals of the Council of the State of Virginia, 1776-1781*
LC—Library of Congress
NCCR—*The Colonial and State Records of North Carolina*, Raleigh
PCC—*Papers of the Continental Congress*, Washington, D. C.

SOUTHERN INDIANS IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

RRG—Candler (ed.), *Revolutionary Records of Georgia*, Atlanta

Raleigh—North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh

SCHGM—*South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*

SCHM—*South Carolina Historical Magazine*

VMHB—*Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*

WLCL—William L. Clements Library, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor

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INDEX

- Atkin, Edmond: British Indian superintendent in South in 1756-61, 5
- Augusta, Ga.: Continental commissioners meet Creeks there in 1776, 40; attacked by Americans, 103-104; captured by Americans, 115
- Barre, Isaac: challenges Indian expenses in Parliament, 89
- Bethune, Farquhar: British deputy among Chickasaw, 18; ordered to patrol Mississippi with Choc-taws in 1778, 73; difficulties of after John Stuart's death, 86; needs Indian goods, 101; criticizes Graham's appointment, 120
- Bowie, John: member of South Carolina Provincial committee on Indian affairs, 20
- Brown, Thomas: British Indian superintendent in the Atlantic District in 1779-84, 89; troubles of as superintendent, 97; confers with Clinton, 97; in Savannah, 97; criticizes Indian establishment, 102; locates at Augusta, 102; defends Augusta against Americans, 103; wounded at Augusta in 1780, 104;
- Brown, Thomas (*cont.*)
defends Augusta in 1781, 115; protects Indian prisoners, 115; complains to Clinton, 119; wants unified superintendency, 120; explains British evacuation to Indians in 1783, 130-31; dismantles imperial Indian department, 138-39
- Burke, Edmund: proposes denial of John Stuart's bills of exchange, 90
- Cameron, Alexander: British deputy among Cherokees, 18; mediates between Cherokees and settlers, 37; forged letter of, 37; finds Cherokees angry with settlers, 29; pursued by South Carolina militia in 1776, 45; works against Virginia peace settlement with Cherokees, 56; driven from Creek towns, 65; hopes to succeed John Stuart, 82; assumes control after Stuart's death, 82; appointed superintendent of Mississippi District, 89; dissatisfied with new Indian establishment, 91; infuriated by Gen. Campbell's Indian policy, 96; strained relations of with Campbell,

Cameron, Alexander (*cont.*)

99; complains about Campbell, 100, 101; praises Choctaw action, 104; headquarters of eliminated by fall of Pensacola, 114; takes refuge in Creek country, 114; death of in 1781, 120

Campbell, Arthur: invades Cherokee country, 107; threatens Cherokees with occupation force, 107; commissioner for Cherokee treaty in 1781, 110

Campbell, Gen. John: urges harmony in Indian department, 83; orders river patrols, 87; myopic policy of toward Indians, 95, 96, 99; strained relations of with Alexander Cameron, 99; threatened with insurrection, 105; requests Creek warriors, 105; inconsistent Indian policy of, 112

Caswell, Richard (governor of North Carolina): apologizes to Cherokees in 1778, 77

Cherokee War of 1760: 6; Cherokee War of 1776: 14

Cherokees: general location and lifestyle of, 8; factionalism of, 12; loss of powder sent by South Carolina in 1775, 25; requested to support Loyalists in 1775, 33; demand withdrawal of settlers, 39; plan of attack in 1776, 41; attack frontiers, 42-43; destruction of Overhill towns in 1776, 48; sufferings in 1776 used as Patriot propaganda, 52; significance of the Cherokee War of 1776, 52; visit Williamsburg in 1777, 57; fate of impresses other tribes, 70; assist in defense of Augusta, 103; towns raided in 1780, 107; called out by Cornwallis in 1780, 106; necessity of treaty with, 110; treaty proposed with in 1781, 110; invited to Philadelphia, 111; raid frontier in spring of 1781, 111; towns burned in 1781, 111; assist Brown

Cherokees (*cont.*)

at Augusta in 1781, 115; abused by frontiersmen, 116; apologetic to Americans, 117; attend treaty in 1781, 118; chiefs visit Richmond in 1781, 118; raided by Andrew Pickens in 1781, 119; turned away from Savannah in 1781, 119; seek peace in 1782, 125; raided by Andrew Pickens in 1782, 126-27; want boundaries defined, 127; grant land to South Carolina in 1782, 127; starving in 1782, 128; complaints against frontiersmen, 133; threatened by North Carolina, 133-34

Chester, Peter (governor of British West Florida): questions Indian expenses, 73; claims authority over Indian department in 1779, 82

Chickamauga Cherokees: set out for Savannah in 1779, 83; attacked by Patriots in 1779, 84; withdraw from South Carolina frontier in 1779, 85; visit Savannah in 1779, 97; towns raided in 1780, 107; sell lands in 1783, 134

Chickasaws: general location and lifestyle of, 8; loyalty to English, 12; fail to patrol Mississippi, 72; remain loyal to British in 1779, 92; threaten Patriots, 93; disagree with Virginia over Kentucky, 93; seek peace with Americans in 1782, 125; negotiations of with Virginia, 131-33, 136-37

Choctaws: general location and lifestyle of, 8; factionalism of, 12; feud with Creeks, 31; dispute with Creeks mediated by John Stuart, 49; fail to watch Mississippi, 72; problems with rum traffic, 73; desire British approval in 1778, 74; given presents by Spanish, 92; courted by Spanish in 1779, 95, 100; raid Spanish at Mobile, 104; piqued by Gen. Campbell, 105;

Choctaws (*cont.*)

raid Mobile in 1781, 112; requested at Pensacola, 112; disgusted with Gen. Campbell, 113; party of journeys to Savannah, 122; visit St. Augustine in 1783, 129

Chote (beloved town of the Cherokees): burned by Americans in 1780, 107

Christian, William: commands Virginia expedition against the Cherokees in 1776, 46; leads troops against Cherokee villages, 47; commissioned to negotiate with the Cherokees in 1777, 55; commissioner for the Cherokee treaty of 1781, 110; obtains money for Cherokee treaty of 1781, 117

Clinton, Gen. Henry: confers with Stuart about Indians, 35; confers with Brown about Indians, 97

Colbert, James: British deputy agent for Chickasaws, 74

Continental Congress: plan for Indian affairs, 22; creation of Indian departments, 22; draft of speech to Indians, 23

Cornell, Joseph: captured by Americans, 121

Cornstalk (Shawnee chief): murdered by Virginians in 1777, 78; death of influences policy of Virginia toward Indians, 78

Creeks: general location and life-style of, 8; factionalism of, 12; feud with Choctaws, 31; asked to support Loyalists in 1775, 33; dispute with Choctaws mediated by Stuart, 49; visit Savannah and Charleston, 60-61; visit Pensacola in 1777-78, 69; courted by Spanish in 1779, 95; aid in defense of Pensacola in 1780, 98; called to Pensacola, 105; needed at Pensacola, 112; disgusted with Campbell, 113; warned by Gen. Anthony Wayne, 122; visit Augusta in 1782, 129; visit St. Augustine in 1783,

Creeks (*cont.*)

129; upset by British withdrawal, 131; Lower Creeks influenced by Patriot agents in 1775, 29; pro-American Lower Creeks raid Upper Creek towns in 1777, 65; Lower Creeks sign treaty with Georgia in 1783, 137; Upper Creeks angry with "Virginians," 29; 300 Upper Creeks aid British at Savannah in 1779, 81; Upper Creeks withdraw from Georgia frontier in 1779, 81; Upper Creeks move toward Georgia frontier in 1779, 81; confiscate Patriot slaves, 82

Dartmouth, Lord: advocates use of Indian auxiliaries, 30

DeWitt's Corner, S. C.: 1777 treaty at, 57-58

Donelson, John: participant in 1783 Chickasaw negotiations, 132-37

Douw, Volkert P.: appointed Indian commissioner by Continental Congress, 23

Dragging Canoe (Cherokee chief): protests Henderson purchase, 13; escorts Henry Stuart to Cherokee towns in 1776, 37; threatens whites in 1776, 40; leads warriors in 1776, 41; opposes Americans, 48; leads secessionists, 48; readies followers for action in 1779, 83

Drayton, William Henry: heads South Carolina Mission to the Cherokee in 1775, 25-26

Durnford, Elias: British commandant at Mobile, 96

Emistisiguo: leader of Upper Creeks, 50; killed near Savannah, 123

Fort Charlotte, S. C.: meetings of Continental commissioners with Cherokees in 1775, 39

- Francis, Turbot: appointed Indian commissioner by Continental Congress, 23
- Franklin, Benjamin: appointed Indian commissioner by Continental Congress, 23
- Frenchmastabie (Choctaw leader): disgusted with Gen. Campbell, 113
- Gage, Gen. Thomas: policy of regarding Indian auxiliaries, 30
- Galphin, George: policy of "Rum and good words," 15; Indian trader, 21; need for supplies, 21; appointed Indian commissioner by Continental Congress, 24; present at Salisbury meeting, 27; member of South Carolina Provincial committee on Indian affairs, 20; confers with Creeks in 1777, 59-60; policies to influence Creeks in 1777, 66
- Gálvez, Bernardo de (Spanish governor at New Orleans): attempts to influence Southern Indians in 1778, 74; sends agents among Indians in 1779, 92; courts Creeks and Choctaws in 1779, 95; commands Spanish siege of Pensacola in 1780, 98; complains about Indian auxiliaries, 98; takes Pensacola in 1781, 113-14
- Georgia: exposed condition of frontier, 51; fears Creek invasion in 1778, 76; demands Indian land cessions in 1783, 135
- Germain, George: plans British use of Indians in 1777, 61; orders Stuart and Indians to support invasion of Georgia, 75; reorganizes Indian department, 88; criticizes Stuart's finances, 91; pressures Cameron, 100
- Gist, Nathaniel: commissioned by Washington to recruit Cherokees, 55; experiences among Cherokees, 55; commissioned by Washington to recruit Indian rangers in 1778, 71; attempts to obtain Long Island of the Holston from Cherokees, 79
- Graham, John: appointed Cameron's successor, 120
- Great Warrior (Cherokee leader): leads raiders in 1776, 41; papers seized by Americans in 1780, 108; visits Williamsburg in 1781, 118
- Greene, Nathanael: concerned with Cherokees in 1781, 109; commissions 1781 Cherokee treaty, 110; informs Congress of Cherokee negotiations, 111
- Habersham, Joseph (Georgia militia officer): impersonates Thomas Brown, 122
- Hamilton, Henry (British commandant at Detroit): orders Northern Indians against Southern frontier, 61
- Hammond, LeRoy: member of South Carolina Provincial committee on Indian affairs, 20
- Harrison, Benjamin (governor of Virginia): defends Indian rights, 128
- Hartley, David: questions Indian expenses, 89
- Hawley, Joseph: appointed Indian commissioner by Continental Congress, 23
- Henderson, Richard: Transylvania Company purchase, 13
- Henry, Patrick: appointed Indian commissioner by Continental Congress, 23; corresponds with Christian about Cherokees in 1777, 54; denies land petition of Nathaniel Gist, 79; orders expedition to Chickamauga towns, 84
- Holms, David: sent by John Stuart on recruiting mission to Lower

- Holms, David (*cont.*)
 Creeks in 1778, 75; recruits Creeks for British in 1779, 86; leads Creeks to Savannah in 1779, 87
- Jefferson, Thomas: attitude toward Indian removal, ix; concerned about supplies for Indians, 93
- Johnson, William: British Indian superintendent in the North in 1755-74, 5
- Jones, Willie: appointed Indian commissioner by Continental Congress, 24; present at Salisbury meeting of Continental Indian commissioners, 27
- Lanier, Robert: commissioner for 1781 Cherokee treaty, 110
- Laurens, Henry (president of South Carolina Provincial Congress): concept of Indian relations, 24
- Lee, General Charles: urges action against Indians in 1776, 43
- Lewis, Col. Charles: commands Virginia Continental battalion on Cherokee expedition in 1776, 46
- Long Island of the Holston: 1777 treaty at, 58, 59; object of dispute between Nathaniel Gist and Cherokees, 79
- McGillivray, Alexander: protects Taitt and Cameron in 1777, 65; leads some Upper Creeks to Savannah in 1779, 81; asked to bring Creeks to Pensacola, 105; needed with Creeks at Pensacola, 111; troubled by British withdrawal, 131; emergence as Creek leader, 135, 138; negotiations with Spanish, 138-39
- Martin, Joseph: Virginia agent to the Cherokees, 67; reveals Chickamauga plans in 1779, 84; disturbed by actions of boundary
- Martin, Joseph (*cont.*)
 surveyors, 93; sent into North Carolina to buy supplies, 93; discloses Cherokee plans in 1780, 106; commissioner for 1781 Cherokee treaty, 110; leads raid on Cherokee towns in 1781, 111; commissioner in Chickasaw negotiations in 1783, 132-37
- Martin, Josiah: royal governor of North Carolina, 13
- Montgomery, Col. John: aids 1779 expedition against Chickamaugas, 84
- North Carolina: supports joint expedition against Cherokees in 1776, 44; legislature approves 1777 treaty but no funds, 77; legislature attempts improvement in Cherokee relations, 78
- Northern Indians: offer black wampum to Cherokees in 1776, 41
- Old Tassel (Cherokee chief): protests Virginia's demands for land, 56; criticizes land seizures, 118
- Opayamataha (Chickasaw chief): loyal to British in 1780, 100
- Pearis, Richard: sent to Cherokees by William Henry Drayton, 27
- Pickens, Andrew: leads 1781 raid into Cherokee country, 119; raids Cherokees in 1782, 126-27
- Preston, William: commissioned by Gov. Henry to negotiate with Cherokees in 1777, 55; commissioned by Greene for 1781 Cherokee treaty, 110
- Prevost, Augustin: British commandant at Savannah, 88
- Rae, Robert: business partner of George Galphin, 24; appointed Indian commissioner by Continen-

- Rae, Robert (*cont.*)
 tal Congress, 24; present at Salisbury meeting of commissioners, 27
- Raven (Cherokee chief): seeks supplies for tribe, 54; complains in 1778 of abuses by whites, 77; confers with Brown, 106; promises Cherokee action, 106; visits Savannah in 1781, 118; explains Cherokee predicament, 118-19
- Reid, John: commissioner in Chickasaw negotiations in 1783, 132-37
- Robertson, James: North Carolina agent to the Cherokees, 67
- Russell, Col. William: leads militia on Virginia frontier in 1776, 42; commands Virginia rangers on 1776 Cherokee expedition, 46
- Rutherford, Griffith: commands North Carolina expedition against Cherokees in 1776, 45, 47
- Schuyler, Philip: appointed Indian commissioner by Continental Congress, 23
- Sevier, John: leads invaders into Cherokee country in 1780, 107; commissioner for 1781 Cherokee treaty, 110; leads troops into Cherokee country in 1781, 111
- Shelby, Evan: commissioned by Gov. Henry to negotiate with Cherokee in 1777, 55; leads 1779 expedition against Chickamaugas, 84; commissioner for 1781 Cherokee treaty, 110
- Shelby, Isaac: commissioner for 1783 Chickasaw negotiations, 133-37
- South Carolina: appoints Provincial Indian commissioners, 20; sends delegation to Cherokees, 25-26; sends powder to Cherokees, 25; supports joint expedition against Cherokees in 1776, 44; expenses of Cherokee expedition of 1776, 141
- Stuart, Charles: British deputy among Choctaws, 18; reports activities of Spanish and Americans, 50; describes Choctaw difficulties in 1777, 73; hopes to succeed John Stuart, 82; assumes control after Stuart's death, 82; difficulties of after Stuart's death, 85; captured by Spanish at Mobile, 96
- Stuart, Henry: 1776 mission to Southern tribes, 31; 1776 journey into Indian country, 36; presence in Cherokee country in 1776, 37; forged letter of outlining Loyalist-Indian plot, 37; flees Manchac in 1778, 72
- Stuart, John: British Indian superintendent in the South in 1762-79, 5; flees Charleston in 1775, 19; first interpretation of revolutionary dispute to Southern Indians, 29; orders Creeks and Cherokees to support Loyalists in 1775, 33; confers with Clinton about Indians, 35; attempts to mediate Choctaw-Creek dispute, 49; disagreement with Tonyn in 1777, 62; confers with Choctaws and Chickasaws in 1777, 64; dispute with Tonyn in 1778, 70; orders Indians to Georgia frontier in early 1779, 81; death of in 1779, 82; parliamentary criticism of Stuart's expenditures, 90-91
- Sycamore Shoals: Henderson Purchase, 13
- Tait, Robert: recruits Choctaws for British, 86
- Taitt, David: British deputy among Creeks, 18; finds Creeks restive in 1777, 64; flees Creek towns in 1777, 65; captured by Spanish at Mobile, 96
- Tallassee King (Lower Creek chief): entertained in Savannah in 1782, 129
- Thomas, Isaac: aids Cameron and

- Thomas, Isaac (*cont.*)
 Henry Stuart, 37; warns settlers in 1776, 37, 41
- Tonyn, Patrick (governor of British East Florida): at 1775 meeting with Lower Creek chiefs, 32; disagreement with John Stuart in 1777, 62; dispute with John Stuart in 1778, 70; questions mission of David Holms to Lower Creeks, 75
- Transylvania Company: 13
- Virginia: joins 1776 expedition against Cherokees, 44; seeks peace with Cherokees in 1777, 55; worried by death of Cornstalk, 78; attempts to placate Cherokees in 1778, 78; Gov. Jefferson seeks supplies for Indians, 93
- "Virginians": derogatory term applied to all frontiersmen by Indians, 6
- Walker, John: appointed Indian commissioner by Continental Congress, 23; present at Salisbury meeting of commissioners, 27
- Washington, George: sends Nathaniel Gist to recruit Cherokees in 1777, 55; seeks Indian rangers in 1778, 71; commissions Gist in 1778, 71
- Wayne, Gen. Anthony: keeps Creeks
- Wayne, Gen. Anthony (*cont.*)
 from Savannah, 121; warns Creeks to keep peace with Americans, 122
- Wilkinson, Edward: member of South Carolina Provincial committee on Indian affairs, 20; appointed Indian commissioner by Continental Congress, 24
- Williams, Joseph: commissioner for 1781 Cherokee treaty, 110
- Williamson, Andrew: member of South Carolina Provincial committee on Indian affairs, 20; commands South Carolina Cherokee expedition in 1776, 44, 47; aids Georgia with South Carolina troops in 1778, 77; turns back Upper Creeks, 81; leads troops against Chickamaugas in 1779, 85
- Willing, James: leads 1778 Patriot raid down Mississippi, 22
- Wilson, James: appointed Indian commissioner by Continental Congress, 23
- Wolcott, Oliver: appointed Indian commissioner by Continental Congress, 23
- Wright, Sir James: last royal governor of Georgia, 19
- Zubly, David: member of South Carolina Provincial committee on Indian affairs, 20

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